

# THE QUESTING BEAST

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# THE QUESTING BEAST

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

BY

OLIVER BALDWIN

“ Loué par ceux-ci, blâmé par ceux-la, me moquant des  
sots, bravant les méchants, je me presse de rire de tout  
. . . de peur d'être obliger d'en pleurer.”

—BEAUMARCHAIS.

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HOMO ANTIQUA VIRTUTE AC FIDE.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### AUDI ALTERAM PARTEM

I WAS born in Westminster at two-thirty a.m. on the 1st March, 1899, feet first and wearing a caul.

The memories of my early childhood are still surprisingly vivid, chiefly, I think, because so many of those years were passed in a constant state of amazement, question and indignation, covering and protecting an extremely sensitive nature with an armour of sulking obstinacy. . . . Which is not an unfair or self-pitying confession for a start.

So much that I remember, for many reasons, need not be stated at this time of my life, though in retrospection I have analysed much that passed in the early years and it has helped me to understand the child mind, which holds a great fascination for me.

Earliest memories? Being in a perambulator with my third sister, pushed by a nurse with nurse-maid walking beside, and coming upon a butcher sitting on a gate with a carving-knife in his hand, mad drunk. He chased us for what seemed a hundred miles, reeling and shouting, his knife brandished in the air. A worthy yeoman's wife, one Mrs. Partridge, held the gate of her little front garden open for us, and soon we were in the shelter of her house. What happened to the butcher I do not remember, but that road between Stourport and Abberley was the scene of a certain amount of excitement in the very early part of this

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century, especially in pea or hop-picking time. Knives and teeth were used with great skill in gipsy fights or against lonely country policemen. I remember being thrilled at the sight of the teeth-marks of some old harridan on the hand of my policeman friend, Mr. Carr. Stourport Bridge has seen several gipsy fights in its day, but such happenings are things of the past, and the places in the hop-fields for the wandering gipsies are now filled by the poor from the Black Country, who look upon their few shillings and the change of surroundings as a Godsend in their lives of semi-starvation and monotony in those unemployment-ridden towns.

Another very early memory is our rides in the donkey-cart. Our cart was a beautiful affair of varnished yellow wood with the full names of my three elder sisters and myself painted in white on the side panel. The donkey had a habit of stopping at every public-house, not for his own benefit but for that of one of the many nurses we had, who always needed refreshment to enable her to cope with her young charges. We therefore resorted to a tin full of pebbles which we took in turn to rattle behind the donkey's tail. The result was a terrific increase in speed, but unfortunately only between those varied halts. I remember once, at the end of a long drive, going up the hill, being unable to control Nature and being very interested in watching my shame and tragedy trickle under the door and into the road. I wondered if I could possibly pass the blame on to the donkey. I was punished, of course. I have never discovered why.

The nurse we had, who was fond of her drink, was a bad-tempered creature, though it is always held up against me that I was the only one who cried when she left; but

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then, I have always been like that and make no apologies. The only way to appease her wrath, I soon discovered, was to make her presents; and for many months I stored up my weekly penny till the wrath made my life too miserable to bear, whereupon I would make my presentation and receive the kiss of forgiveness.

The thing I hated above all was going to church. I did not understand a word of it; and I must say, much of it is still incomprehensible to me. I gnawed the back of the chair in front and duly put a three-penny-piece into a bag that always came round during the last hymn. Once I and my second sister thought it would be possible, when putting in our money, to take a bigger piece out. Our conspiracy never came off, however, for my sister, who was to make the first try, failed at the last moment, and by the time my indignation at her cowardice had subsided, the bag had passed and I was a threepenny-bit to the good; being determined to hang on to something. Had we been discovered we should, of course, have been punished. My life at that time seems to have been punishment for something or other, but never a word of explanation. The only time I ever regretted anything for which I was punished was the only time the crime was ever explained to me; and then the punishment was a worried conscience for having made someone unhappy—at least, so I was told at the time, but I do not believe it now. After all, I had only refused to go to church and locked myself in the lavatory, which was full of books that had been hidden there earlier, in anticipation.

There is a delightful little story of my two elder sisters at their first church-going. After the service the one addressed the other: "What did you sing? I sang

'Rule, Britannia' and 'God save the Queen.' I wonder if there are many children who understand a church service any better than that. . . .

We were all very young when we made the acquaintance of Nicholas Nickleby, David Copperfield, Jingle, Mr. Pecksniff and the galaxy of glorious folk who people the pages of Charles Dickens. The books were read to us by different governesses, and they are still an abiding joy to me. On summer evenings under a giant monkey-puzzle tree, shaded by a huge cedar that stood so close that many years later our beloved monkey-puzzle fell by the axe to save the cedar, we would lie and listen to the humour and pathos of England of days gone by. Those were the grand moments of a puzzled childhood. Watching the fire throw the flickering silhouette of the fender on to the ceiling as I lay in bed on a winter's evening. Again, in the summer, to bed with the sun still piercing the blinds and the click of croquet balls or the low hum of the lawn-mower rising from the lawn, and the voices of the grown-ups, who were so much older than I and so much more unsympathetic than I would have wished them to be. But they did not know that, and I could not explain. Even at that time I only had one ambition, and that was to go away—where, I did not know, but somewhere where one could be left alone to work it all out and have time to answer to oneself the eternal question "Why?" I knew then of the search for the Holy Grail and the wanderings of the "Questing Beast," and whether I were a knight of the Round Table or the Questing Beast himself I did not care. I felt I was seeking something, and no one would tell me what. The doctor had brought me in a bag, but—why? Should I not have been happier if he had taken me back



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whence I came—and where was that? How long would all this go on? No one would say. It never struck me that they did not know. I found out that if I told the truth I was punished, and often if I lied I could escape. Etón continued to drive this doctrine deep into me; but it has never succeeded; unfortunately sometimes, because acquiescence—the living of a lie—often saves so much unpleasantness.

I suffered a great deal from nightmares as a boy, but after a time I found I could always awaken when the dream became too unbearable by conjuring up a bridge over which I would jump into the water. The moment I hit the water I would wake. So confident was I at my easy means of escape that to giants or ogres, ghoulies or bad people in general I would say: "It's all right. You can't hurt me; I'll just jump over here. See. Good-bye." One night I was being chased by a particularly unpleasant man with an evil face and, as usual, my mode of progression was slow. He came so close that I had to conjure up my bridge rather quicker than usual. With a sigh of relief I leapt into the water, but I did not wake. Down at the bottom I was immediately surrounded by long-leggety beasties who shouted out: "Ha, ha! you thought you'd wake up, but you haven't, you see." So there was no way out, and my dreams were very terrifying.

Once a week we had a dancing class, when a middle-aged lady in brown came all the way from Cheltenham to teach us. In order to swell the class we had one or two children from the neighbouring houses who drove up in dog-carts. Here we learnt to polka—with a one, two, three and a one, two, three—what a happy dance it is;—and waltz; to barn dance and to enjoy the Sir Roger.

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We also learnt the two-step and dumb-bell exercises, and were taught to bow and curtsy—but I was the only boy, and therefore the only one to bow. The others could only curtsy.

In the winter we went occasionally to dances in the neighbourhood, generally in our grandfather's brougham. The inside smelt abominably of leather and stuffiness, and I always felt ill with my back to the horses. I remember the long drives in the fog, when the footman would take out one of the carriage lamps and lead the horses. We were rather thrilled.

I soon discovered that I was made differently from my sisters, and here also was a little interest; but nothing very extraordinary, since animals I had seen were physically divided into sexes. I think if there had been any undue prudery between us at that time I should have looked upon our physical differences with the curiosity of Bluebeard's wife; but because our knowledge came about naturally I was spared the pulsating wonderment that comes to boys later in life, thereby making so much of what is, after all, nothing more extraordinary than a difference in height, features or colouring.

Girls and their ways were rendered more familiar to me, since, although for male companionship I had only my cousin, John Kipling, when on rare occasions he stayed with us, my sisters were constantly surrounded by girl friends. The quarrels and affections of this ever-changing medley were of interest to me, and the knowledge gained has been of great service to me in understanding phases of life which come into one's way more often than is imagined.

The governesses my sisters had (and whom I shared),

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both French and English, were of the usual kind, but only one was a bad disciplinarian, and she suffered from chocolates filled with mustard and the waving of red-hot pokers round her head in the dark. Poor thing, how she must have hated us! We always had a French maid in the house and could therefore all speak French fairly fluently, but we soon felt the need of a language we could talk together and which no one could understand. The speaking of this family language in public drew threats of punishment, but it was not till later that I realized that the English will invariably arrest, persecute, imprison or revile anyone or anything they do not understand.

In my family there is a deal of Celtic blood, and far away a streak of Spanish. It took me twenty years to discover that in temperament I was of the Mediterranean type. Had any one of my masters or mistresses realized that, it might have explained a lot of things to them.

Every fourth Sunday was a joy to me. On that day we did not go to church because the service was full of Athanasian creeds and things, and these were wrong, so we assembled one by one in my mother's boudoir and recited the Lord's Prayer and the Thanksgiving, even then leaving out a few phrases at the end. This took only about ten minutes, which was a great relief. I rather wish now we had been taught the Lord's Prayer as it originally was before the Church altered it—"Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," instead of "our trespasses."

As for lessons, we did History and Geography and Latin, Music, Drawing and Arithmetic; but all in the old-fashioned way—being terribly concerned about Alfred and the cakes and George and an apple-dumpling, but knowing

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nothing of how many people had cakes in Alfred's day or apple-dumplings in George's time.

I am ever grateful for the Shakespeare I learnt in those early days. Here was something I could understand. Here was beauty in rhythm. Here were the emotions of men and women. Life was interesting. . . . And how wicked and how awful to put out Arthur's eyes and . . . I, like Arthur, knew Hubert could never do a thing like that.

"Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,  
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester . . ."

How those names would roll off my tongue. And is not "freshly remembered" a wonderful ending to a line?

One or two of the plays were not to be read, as they were not quite nice. So Shakespeare was not "quite nice"? What a comfort!

Often when I was kept behind for not knowing my "tables" or some Latin declension, I would get off by a little subtle flattery of my governess and one or two chaste kisses. My sisters still remember this and call it cunning. They called it worse names in the old days. I think they were a little jealous at times of the only boy, and I do not blame them. They were often punished for my faults then, but if it teaches them to beware of injustice with their own children, their sacrifices will not have been in vain. I was a sulky child and rather given to complaining when I was alone against the Amazon battalion, but I do not think I was ever cruel to them or wished them ill, and I certainly always let them play with my toys—at least, all except my soldiers; but then, they never could understand how easily their heads came off. On the other hand, I lied magnificently to save them if it was a case of some-

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thing we had done together and the ringleader was to be punished if I would only give her away.

Contrary to Samson, my shortage of hair was a source of strength to me; but what a grip I could get on my second sister's thick long tresses! Compared to some families, we were very peaceful; though one was always certain of a good row on the question of the Civil War. My three sisters were Cavaliers, and I the only Roundhead. Once we decided that the best way out of the difficulty was to ask our father which side he was on. Making sure he was in a good mood, we trooped down to the library to ask; but the answer left us as divided as ever, for he said he would have been like the squire who, aloof from the trouble, drove his hounds between the opposing armies at Edgehill—or was it Naseby?—and passed on to his hunting.

As I have said before, I was a sulky child, and one afternoon I was to pay a severe penalty for my behaviour. It happened in this wise. My mother, having returned from shopping in Kidderminster, called from the lawn to the house that she had "something" for the children. A wild scamper from the nursery brought the four of us excitedly out of doors. The "something" were three cotton sunbonnets of the type once universally worn by countrywomen—one for each sister, but nothing for me. Unhappy and disappointed I turned away, deaf to the appeals of my mother, arm covering my eyes. I walked sulkily through the garden door into the stable-yard and towards the stone steps that led up to the back door of the house. As my eyes were covered by my arm I did not realize how near I was to the steps, and my foot coming up unexpectedly against the first one, I fell on my face,

striking my front teeth on the fourth step with such force that I drove the two front teeth up behind my nose. In a mass of blood and tears I was carried indoors by the French maid, who happened at that time to be putting my tricycle away in a nearby shed. I must have been five or six at this time, and the result of my sulkiness in this case gave me a slightly deformed upper jaw. The family dentist who retrieved my teeth was an Australian in Kidderminster who kept a small tank in his surgery full of toads and snakes, which latter we were allowed to put round our necks. He was a very nice man, I thought.

Another memory of my early years is the walks in the winter with a governess constantly telling one or the other of us not to lag behind nor walk so far ahead. We used often to take puddings and warm clothing to old or bed-ridden persons in the village, and my sisters were frequently frightened by the aged folk suffering from strange diseases who hobbled to the door and bobbed, or in some cases snatched the gift from us and banged the door. I never minded them. They interested me. They were different. I must say I was sorry they had to have milk puddings, for we as children were forced to eat them—and if we were unable to, then they would be cold for our consumption at tea-time. Once we opened the nursery cupboard and the dog had the pudding. The result of forcing us to eat things that made us retch is that neither I nor any of my three sisters can bear the sight of milk puddings to this day.

I remember, during these walks, wondering whether it would not have been a good thing if my elder brother had lived. He was the first child of my parents' marriage but had been stillborn, and his photograph was in a locked

case, shaped like a heart, that lay on a small shelf by my mother's bed. I was always attracted by this case and, when no one was looking, used to hold it and be fond of it. It was not till I went to school that I was allowed to look inside. His name was to have been Christopher, and as such he became a dream playmate to me.

I had many dream playmates as a boy, and my sisters had dream families that increased nightly. For hours at night I, in the next room, could hear my second and third sisters carrying on the eternal life of their respective dream families; giving them parties, buying them clothes, and asking each other's family out to tea.

My fourth sister was born in 1902 and my brother in 1904. I remember the birth of my brother quite distinctly, as very shortly after he arrived from John Barker's in London he developed dysentery, and our pet bantams were all killed to make him chicken broth. At that time we much preferred the bantams. When my brother was on his way, I happened to be in my mother's bedroom while she was changing, when she was suddenly taken ill. Being five at the time I had enough sense to walk to the door and turn the key, whereupon I sat down quietly till the sickness had passed. I am still rather proud of this sympathetic presence of mind, so I allow myself to quote it. Not that I remember the instance, but it is one of the very few good marks that are still quoted on my behalf.

In 1906 my father fought Kidderminster in that fateful General Election when the Liberal Party swept the country. It was taken for granted that Kidderminster was a safe Tory seat, and so, in the very highest spirits and the smartest clothes, my sisters and I and a governess set off in a brake to hear the result declared. As we drove through the streets

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waving blue favours we talked loudly and proudly of the expected result. Passing by the market a man shouted near by: "Don't count your chickens before they're hatched." We thought he was a very rude man. We descended at the Lion Hotel and discovered in a few minutes that the Liberal had won. The most disappointed man was my grandfather, who was Tory member for the Western Division of the county. My father's opponent was E. B. Barnard, years later the President of the Metropolitan Water Board and one of my father's knighthood creations. My grandfather's unsuccessful opponent, who came to our house with my grandfather for lunch during the fight, was Mr. Benson, afterwards Lord Charnwood.

I have very vivid recollections of my grandfather, whom I used to consider the handsomest man I had ever seen. He was short, but extremely strongly and squarely built, with black curly hair and long beard, both turning grey, black eyes, a very white complexion, beautiful teeth and nose. He wore a red tie and an eyeglass. He was Chairman of the Great Western Railway, and we were very disappointed when we learned he did not blow a whistle nor wave a flag. His hats always intrigued us, for they were of the kind very rarely worn now, black, rounded top-hats. His presence was very striking, and his personality is still remembered in Worcestershire amongst the older members of the Friendly Societies of which he was an ardent supporter. He gave us each five pounds every Christmas, which were immediately confiscated into the maw of a Savings Bank account. A few years later, when he passed over, my grandmother suggested that it would be a dutiful and graceful thing for us children to spend the accumulated pounds in a suitable stained-glass



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window to be erected to his memory. Happily, my mother saw neither the grace nor duty in such an expenditure, and put her foot firmly down.

I was only once seriously disappointed in my grandfather. I had asked him for a suit of armour, and he had replied by sending me only a breastplate and a French cuirassier's helmet, and how on earth could I join my dream-fellowship of the Round Table without a complete suit of armour and a shield? I was almost afraid to go into the garden (where they lived, of course) lest they should see me and mock at my being improperly dressed!

When my grandfather died, which he did very suddenly, he was buried in Wilden churchyard in the presence of the largest concourse of people I had ever seen. I was taken to the funeral, and was thrilled to see his old coachman and other grown-ups crying like children. I had never known grown-ups could cry until then, and I felt an affinity with Olympus for the first time in my life. Some months later I performed my first public function. I had to stand alone on a dais and pull a string, whereupon a memorial clock was to strike twelve. Of course, it did not. It had not been set exactly, and the three ticking seconds between the pulled string and the strike were long, very long and frightening.

My father became Member of Parliament for West Worcestershire in 1908 in unopposed succession to his father, and he rented a house in Queen's Gate, at the same time as I first went to school.

As children (much encouraged by my mother) we organized several acting performances about Christmas-time, but my first appearance resulted in such a complete "dry-up" that my mother took on my part after the first

few minutes, much to my shame. The only one of my sisters with any histrionic ability was my second sister, and when in later years my brother grew old enough, we performed as a trio for many years with conspicuous success, even writing our own plays and musical medleys, ensconcing my eldest sister "behind" with a piano, on which instrument, as well as the violin, she was an exceptionally capable performer. It is one of the minor tragedies of life that this gift of music has been neglected since her marriage, Bridge, I believe, having taken its place. *Bona si sua norint!*

When I was about thirteen a new wing was built to the house, and in it we had a proper stage, a good green-room and footlights. We made our own scenery, and even had a "dresser" in the person of our valued ex-under-nurse Rose (then become housemaid), a call-boy and stage-manager. We constructed our scenery with the help of a local carpenter, and gave daily performances during the winter holidays to any desirous of attending. I think I enjoyed those days as much as any; though now and again someone or other would not "play any more."

The same little differences used to arise when three or four of us and Rose played cricket, taking the names of famous cricketers as we batted or bowled. The trouble was probably due to the fact that, as I was older than my youngest sister and brother, the length of time they fielded was out of proportion to their sojourn at the batting crease. I had been a member of the Worcestershire Cricket Club since I was born, and few things gave me greater pleasure than the family trips into Worcester for the county matches. How I idolized the Fosters, and how proud if any of them spoke to me! Pearson and Bowley, Dick Burrows, Cuffe,

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Bale, G. H. Simpson-Hayward, A. W. Isaac, six Fosters, W. B. Burns, the fastest bowler in England, and Ted Arnold, I knew them all to talk to and had their photographs in an album. To watch such giants as Tom Hayward of Surrey, or Gilbert Jessop of Gloucester, or Albert Relf of Sussex puzzled and disturbed (after having scored heavily) at the lob-bowling of George Simpson-Hayward was a great joy to me. Our local rector, Martin Buckle, rose considerably in my estimation when I learnt that, when playing for the Gentlemen of Worcestershire, he had lifted a ball from the County Ground into the River Severn. Several times I had seen H. K. Foster and W. B. Burns send a ball on to the pavilion roof, but the river was much farther away.

In 1910 my mother's mother died, and this was the first death that came right into my life, for it was connected with a dramatic situation which I well remember. My mother had received a disquieting telegram from Lady Burne-Jones, who lived at Rottingdean hard by my grandmother's home, and fearing the worst, had sent it over to the Wilden Iron Works some four miles away for my father to interpret. While she waited the return of the car she paced agitatedly round the garden in the front of the house, watched with baited breath by my second sister and myself, who, scenting something very unusual, were hidden in the laurel bushes. As time went on we noticed my mother was crying. This we had never seen her do before and we were rather unhappy. Suddenly the noise of the approaching car made my mother stop, and her anxious eyes followed the motor up the drive. If my father were inside she knew the worst had happened. If he were not, there was no immediate cause for undue

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sorrow. At the top of the drive my mother caught sight of my father and she gave one long, despairing cry as if her heart had broken. Not waiting for the car to slow up, as it rounded the bend, my father rushed out towards my mother, picked her up in his arms, and ran with her into the house. We were very silent and very moved, and I think we cried a little too. Anyway, everything was very gloomy, and then my father and mother went away dressed in black, and I wrote my mother a letter and told her not to cry because I did not like it. I think she liked that letter, but I am afraid the sympathy was a selfish one on my part, as I suppose most sympathy is; for it is when the sorrow of another affects us that we are most ready to be sympathetic.

I had a wonderful collection of lead soldiers as a boy, and the battles waged on the nursery floor were thrilling and lasted for days. An elderly friend of my Grandmother Baldwin, named Miss Plowden, illustrated the Charge of the Light Brigade for me with great clarity and knowledge, and when our cousin, Rudyard Kipling, came to stay he would spend much time on the floor with me, full of new and unexpected ideas. My second sister had a soft heart and was very upset when, with a cannon and on a scaffold of bricks, I executed an entire Sepoy regiment for mutiny; and once I was amazed at the numbers I had still to slay till I discovered that, out of kindness, she had resurrected the dead and made the condemned as endless a succession of men as a stage army.

Not content with an army of lead soldiers, I formed a human army of my two sisters (the second and the fourth), my brother, the French governess, and the two children from a neighbouring house. We had many battles, chiefly

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against stinging nettles, who were Germans, and in the winter late afternoons we had night attacks. I was then the proud possessor of a real sword which had belonged to my father when he was in the Worcestershire Volunteer Artillery in about '92. Childish as our battles were, the suspense of waiting in a dark wood for an enemy was not so very remote from what I was to experience later in actual warfare. None of us children was ever afraid of the dark as far as I can remember, and to this day I have a great love of night walks. This sympathy, as I may call it, with the night stood me in good stead later on.

We spent a few weeks every summer, till my Grandmother Ridsdale died, at Rottingdean, and there we all learnt to swim at a very early age. Those summers were happy times, and picnics on the downs with our cousins, the Mackails, and the rather older children of Edward Carson are still vivid memories. I was to see a lot of Rottingdean in the years that followed, for in 1908 I went to school there and began the second stage of my life.

## CHAPTER TWO

IN 1905 and 1906 our parents took the four eldest of the family to Normandy on a holiday. Each visit we stayed at a little village called Veules-les-Roses where we made many friends. The bathing was excellent, and the entertainments for children exactly what we would have chosen. We learnt the French waltz and the Maxiche, which was then the rage; and out of doors we "diaboloed" for all we were worth. We had wooden "diabolos," but some of the French children had celluloid ones, and we were jealous of them.

One day while my sisters were in the Casino dancing, I wandered alone on to the beach, which was almost deserted owing to the children's entertainment in the dance hall. At one end I noticed a Frenchman painting a picture, and towards him I walked. Treading softly so as not to disturb him, I soon came up to where he sat, and watched the brush work with the greatest interest. Suddenly, and without a word of warning, the Frenchman spun round on his camp-stool, his right arm extended, and, catching me in the stomach, sent me flat on my back on the stones with the breath knocked almost clean out of my body. He then continued his painting as if nothing had happened. I picked myself up, shaking from head to foot, and walked slowly away, full of wonder. I was only seven years old, but I did not cry—I was too amazed.

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Why had he done this when I had not hurt him and was full of admiration for his art? It was unjust—very unjust—and I have never forgotten it. I returned later to the dancers, very subdued. It seemed to me nothing could be done. I was not angry with the man at all, but he had been unjust, and if I had had the courage I should have liked to have argued his conduct with him. That was all I felt about it then, and I hugged the secret to my heart.

I was very popular in France with a number of very charming French girls of between seventeen and twenty-one, whom I called my fiancées. Of these I only remember Suzanne, a blonde, and Germaine, a brunette. They used to kiss me a lot, which I remember liking. I think I should probably feel the same now.

The comparative peace of family life broke in 1908 with my departure for school at Rottingdean. Comforted with the knowledge that I should see my cousin, John Kipling, and another friend named Lawrence Clarke; burdened with a huge trunk, and fully conversant with the weight of a cricket ball, I was put into a train at Victoria amidst a crowd of strange boys and taken to Brighton. I cried a bit, but as I saw a lot of other boys doing the same thing, I stopped. We arrived at Brighton, where we were bundled into several two-horsed brakes and were finally landed at Rottingdean.

There, in spite of my two friends and the fact that my grandmother and aunt lived in the village, I suffered most acutely from home-sickness. In this malady the headmaster's wife was most kind and sympathetic. I do not think it lasted more than a week; but my pride was considerably hurt when I found that I was to be in a form taught by a woman, who was the only mistress in the

school. I was happier during my second term, and, taking everything together, I quite enjoyed my three years at this school.

There was no corporal punishment here, punishment consisting of deducting marks for a series of offences which were inscribed on a weekly report and sent home to our parents. Those of us who lost no marks during the whole term were presented with a small silver school shield to wear on our watch-chains, and those that lost no marks during a whole year were given a gold shield. This shield we discovered to be only silver-gilt, and our faith in its importance was lowered in proportion. The headmaster had a most violent temper which he was unable to control, but in his sane moods he was most charming, especially, I noticed, to parents. He took violent likes and dislikes, and was feared by most of the boys. I shall never forget my amazement during my last term at Rottingdean, when, having been in his bad books for the past week and told I was a good-for-nothing, etc., hearing during the presentation of sports prizes that I, the winner of the leaving boys' race, was one of the finest boys who had ever been there and my departure would be a great loss to the school. But then, of course, the parents were there. Even in those early days that sort of humbug was quite nauseating to me.

We used to have to box in the gymnasium on certain days. As this was a sport I had always considered useless, I was bold enough to ask why I should have to hit someone I quite liked in the face and, more important still, be hit myself. The answer was, it made you a "man"—the sort of man who would fight lions and defend his country in time of war. I imagined that to be a grand thing. I made no further objections. Later on, of course,



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I realized that proficiency in this art gave you a cushy job "for the duration" on the physical training staff of an army or corps.

Anyway, as I had to box, I made a secret compact with my fellow-to-be-tortured, and we agreed to spare each other's face.

This school was essentially "patriotic." We waved flags, we marched, we had little guns that fired little blank cartridges, we formed square to receive cavalry (or dirty knees, whichever came first), we beat drums, we sang "God Save the King," and "Lest We Forget." We marched to church to remind Christianity we knew our religion. We were taught that God had given us an Empire—including Hong-Kong and, I suppose, opium—and altogether we were trained just as "seditiously and blasphemously" as, in the eyes of certain Tory M.P.'s, are the children of English Communists; for, after all, what is the difference? They both believe in force to maintain an ideal, a Tsar with a crown on or a proletarian Tsar; a God you can talk about but must not attempt to imitate, or no God in particular. However, this is beside the point. The result of the training was to teach me that one Englishman was worth ten foreigners, six Irishmen (if they came from the South), and I forget how many of other races. We thought the Army and Navy the finest professions in the world, and that nobody who had not been to one of the six great "public" schools could be a gentleman. . . .

I remember being caught reading H. A. Vachell's "The Hill" which my father had lent me. This was confiscated by the headmaster for some reason or other, and the result was that every boy who could, read it in the holidays. Mr. Vachell should be grateful to the headmaster. I

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believe the real reason for the confiscation was that the book was considered sentimental, and, of course, that is one of the things no Englishman should ever be. They should always have the spirit that makes empires, of one Johnny Smith, aged six, who on hearing the news of his mother's death was seen to cry. "Crying, my lad?" "No, sir; a piece of dust in my eye, sir."

One of the constant events was a lecture, with coloured slides, on Dr. Barnardo's homes; or the Navy League, without coloured slides, and therefore not so popular. I do not remember if there were any lectures on foreign missions, but perhaps the school was too busy in converting its own little brothers into something or other to be concerned with Polynesia. Anyway, there were plenty of missions to be supported later at Eton.

We had a concert once a year. I attended three in my whole time at Rottingdean, all exactly the same, and I got a good telling-off at the third and last for not laughing at the same joke I had heard twice before. It was careless of me, because I generally took particular pains at school to laugh at jokes I was meant to laugh at, more especially should they be made by a master.

My chief pastime during those days was collecting soldier postcards and pictures of cricketers, of both of which I had a large number. Unhappily cigarette cards had not then become the fashion, otherwise I should undoubtedly have made a collection, since, even to-day, they hold a fascination for me.

Most boys collected postage stamps, but I never had the patience to learn all that had to be known about them in order to become a worthy collector.

I was fairly popular at this school, and was famed for

telling stories on Sunday mornings in the dormitories when we had an hour in which we could talk before getting up. When I think of my mental acrobatics in those days and the tales I told of supposed happenings to myself and family, I almost blush with shame; and yet the boys believed them at the time. We went for long country walks on Sundays, generally with the mistress, who was very interested in butterflies. She always struck me as being rather jealous of my inventive brain, since the boys were more interested in walking with me and listening to my stories than they were in her "chalk-hill blues," or her memories of other boys who had been her pupils and were now building an empire for us by pushing down those of other nations. The other masters were very popular and must have been the best of good fellows. One was killed in the war, and the others run their own schools now, I believe.

Parents' Day once a year in the summer produced an amazing crop of prosperous-looking men and women and gawky sisters, and many a boy regretted for days afterwards that his family had ever shown themselves, since he was "ragged" unmercifully for the shape or clothes or even voice of his proud father, fond mother or doting sister. I remember when my grandmother used occasionally to watch us playing games over the wall I would pray she did not notice me, lest I should suffer for it. Once she had been seen speaking to me, and the next time she appeared there were cries of:

"Hi, Baldwin, there's your old nurse come to see you." Followed by: "I say, you fellows, Baldwin's got a nurse."

What horrible creatures boys can be . . . but "ashes on my head" for being ashamed of a very wonderful and

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dear woman who, luckily, could not understand my desire to avoid her and put it down to shyness.

I believe things are not the same nowadays, and that parents and families are now openly discussed at these schools.

One of the boys—the first I had talked to when I entered the train at Victoria prior to my first term—had a father who was a duke. I gazed at him shrewdly when he came down to Rottingdean. He looked quite an ordinary man, a little sad and frail perhaps, but the only peculiarity I noticed about him was that he had a fur-lined coat. Yet my grandfather had one too. I was a little puzzled about this duke business. I am still.

Our school never played other schools after my first term. The excuse was that we were afraid of epidemics, but the truth was that in a certain football match our headmaster had disagreed with the referee, lost his temper and taken his boys off the field.

In the summer we swam in the sea, and in the spring we went into Brighton to the now defunct Brill's Baths, both of which were much enjoyed.

That abomination, the Eton suit, was worn on Sundays; the rest of the time we wore a suit known as the "Norfolk," with an Eton collar that gave us all the habit of stretching our necks in and out like so many hens going for a walk. The *Boys' Own Paper* and *Chums* were much read, and there was keen rivalry between the different protagonists as to the superior merits of one or the other. An excellent library of boys' books enabled me to read a great deal. Henty, Brereton, Guy Boothby, Herbert Strang were authors who gave me a new world in which I could retire for peace, retrenchment and reform.

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It always amazes me that neither at my private school nor at Eton was I ever taught the slightest thing about economics or political science. No whisper reached our ears to tell us how we and others were enabled to live. The amazing bluff of money, interest, and methods of distribution, etc.; the fact that some could live without working and others lived in pauper institutions; none of these things were ever mentioned, and even when I was seventeen I remember being amazed to think that £10,000 produced a constant interest, and that however long you lived, provided your investments were sound, the £10,000 still remained intact at the end of your time. When I learnt this I thought that the man who invented simple interest was the cleverest rascal that ever lived. I now know that he was nothing to the genius who invented compound interest. It might be suggested that I surely learnt about simple and compound interest in arithmetic. I did, but nobody ever explained it. It was just "mathematics" to me, and, as such, simply an exercise to be got through as quickly as possible and as soon forgotten. I suppose there exists someone who can make mathematics interesting to the non-mathematical mind, but I have yet to meet him.

When I was ten I committed a ghastly crime. I wrote a ghost story and illustrated it. It was entitled "The Hell-born Babe" and was passed from one boy to the other for perusal. It was an immediate success till the mistress confiscated it and gave it to the headmaster. I was summoned to his study, and there my first work was burnt before my eyes to the accompaniment of threats and sneers. How dare I write such rubbish? Who did I think I was? I was to promise never to write again. I

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promised. I have since broken my promise. It was a wicked book. Ghosts? Where did I get such ideas from? From the servants, he supposed. And so on; shouting at me like a lunatic whilst I wept in terror, amazement and despair, at seeing my creation so cruelly treated. Can anyone in their senses imagine themselves behaving like that to a boy of ten? Especially to one whose grandmother had written one of the best ghost-story books in the language—"The Shadow on the Blind."

Perhaps it was because it was such an unjust thing to do—like the action of the French painter on the beach at Veules—that it made such an impression on me. It did not deter me. Opposition is the only thing I know of that can make me carry a thing through. That is perhaps the weakest part of my nature, for one is apt to be blind to the original object of the action if one always goes on those lines. Anyway, from that moment ever afterwards I have scribbled, and intend to do so.

Rudyard Kipling, to whom I told this the next holidays, was so delighted with the title that my pride was calmed.

The great sunshine in my life at Rottingdean were the visits John Kipling and I made every other Sunday to lunch with our great-aunt, Georgiana Burne-Jones, who lived in a little white house, filled with lovely pictures that her husband had painted, and furniture that had been designed by their great friend William Morris. There was a lovely piano there painted blue with angels' figures thereon and green notes in place of the black ones. A toy-cupboard filled with lovely things . . . a garden of fig trees and roses . . . an upstairs studio that always seemed full of sunshine.

Flush with the road stood "Northend House," and

yet in those days it was as peaceful as if a mile of carriage drive had lain between it and the outside world.

Aunt Georgie, as we called her, was sixty-eight when I first went to school. She was exceedingly small, very lovely and with the presence of an empress. A laugh that is still the most beautiful I have ever heard, and the nature of a saint, if ever there was one. She played the piano, and even at such an old age sang very sweetly. When she was young she had a powerful soprano voice and could have been trained successfully for opera. On the table in the studio, after lunch, she would place the Morris "Morte d'Arthur," bound in wood painted by her husband, vellum-backed and clasped by leather that ran from silver bosses. From this she would read, and no voice ever read the old English so beautifully. I sat enraptured Sunday after Sunday. And oh, those names! How I loved them: Sir Perin de Mountbeliard, Sir Bobart le Cure Hardy, Sir Meliot de Logres, Sir Mador de la Porte, Sir Persant of Inde, Sir Brian de les Isles, the best of all Sir Grummore Grummer-sum who, had he lived in Crim-Tartary, would surely have made a worthy husband for the Countess Gruffanuff.

Since so many of the pictures on the walls dealt with incidents in the life of the Companionship of the Round Table, my Sundays were as far from the twentieth century as possible. I do not think John Kipling enjoyed the reading as I did; he preferred looking at picture-books by himself. This reminds me of a story my great-aunt, Edith Macdonald, used to tell of John's father, Rudyard. As a child he had discovered a book full of pictures. The next time he had an opportunity of renewing his acquaintance with the book, he bore it laboriously to the hearth-rug and, not realizing it was upside down, hurriedly began to turn

the pages half over, but as the pictures were printed on one side only, he was rewarded by nothing but the sight of blank pages. His face took on a look of fearful amazement and, as he closed the book very gently, he looked up at his aunt and in a hushed voice asked: "Is this God's doing?"

Our great-aunt, Edith Macdonald, who often used to stay with her sister Georgie, was an expert at telling us the childish sayings of our parents, many of which are stored in my mind.

I have referred to a toy-cupboard. Now this was a veritable paradise. There were Russian toys of bears and men that sawed wood; a whole family of Russian peasants that fitted one inside the other till the smallest was only the size of a collar-stud; birds that turned round and round and chirped as you wound a handle—toys of all sizes and all countries. My especial privilege was being allowed to take one out right from the very back because my aunt knew I would not knock the others over as I was very careful with my hands.

One day Aunt Georgie and I burnt a book by a well-known author in a bonfire we made ourselves in the garden, because we both agreed it was sad and altogether a wrong book. I remember that day well. I had always been fond of bonfires, and the idea of burning something out of the ordinary gave our incendiarism a touch of excitement. At that time of my life I wanted to be a soldier. My first ambition had been to be Father Christmas, my second to be a motor-driver, and this was my third.

Aunt Georgie asked me one day what I intended to be, and when I told her a soldier she seemed very upset. I remember how she explained to me that killing was hardly



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a Christian profession, and though I listened to her earnest and beautiful voice and knew the gentleness of her soul, hers was but a voice crying in the wilderness, and it is only since the war I have realized she was right. She had been much abused during the South African war for her attitude of pacifism, but it had not shaken her conviction, which was firmly rooted in her nature. The Great War (to end war) must have been a terrible shock for her, but by that time we had, unhappily for me, drifted apart. She told me, during that little conversation, that wars breed war, and that once you begin believing in killing, killing continues. Of course she was right; but it was the first time I had heard "sedition" spoken, and I did not understand how the majority could ever be wrong.

During my three years at Rottingdean only illness kept me away from her house on every other Sunday. When in 1911 I said farewell to Rottingdean and was about to go to Eton, Aunt Georgie sent both John and me a copy of her son-in-law, J. W. Mackail's "Sayings of the Lord Jesus Christ," bound in dark red morocco. To me she wrote:

"DEAREST OLIVER,—I am so sorry our Sunday mornings are over. I am sending you and John to-day the copies of the book that I promised you. I've had them bound alike as a sign of our times together.

"I shall go on loving you,

"Ever yours,

"G. B.-J."

To John Kipling:

"JOHN DEAR,—This is a line of love from your Aunt Georgie, who can write but a few words just now . . . so

they should be of the truest. I have dearly liked your little visits to me these last three years . . . and am glad to have seen you both as child and boy. Even if you had stayed here and I had seen you from time to time, I don't suppose I should have known much more of you, for I remember the days of my own youth and how I was too busy inside myself to speak of it to any grown-up, however loved.

"So I commend you to Him who made you and is always with you, and I hope and believe all good things about you.

"Herewith comes your copy of the book I promised both you and Oliver . . . I have had them bound alike.

"Ever your loving,

"G. B.-J.

"Yes, it will be fourteen years to-morrow . . . and I am looking across from the green writing-table in the studio to the little room where you first drew breath."

When John was killed at Loos in 1915 I asked for his copy and his parents gave it me. I have the two books to-day, and those are an ever-present memory of my Aunt Georgie—the most perfect Christian character it has ever been my good fortune to meet.

She died in February, 1920, and the little house, altered and lonely, is inhabited by others; but when I go down to Rottingdean, as I do occasionally, I remember the Morris "Morte d'Arthur" and the toy-cupboard, the ginger pudding and the pictures, and were I to see those lovely blue eyes smiling a welcome from the drawing-room window I should not be surprised, for she was the house and the little house was her.

. . . . .

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I passed into the Upper Fourth at Eton, and the last week at Rottingdean was a riotous one of happiness and hope, tinged with a certain regret that I should not see my friends again, for I and only one other were to go that term to Eton; others were to go to Osborne, Charterhouse, Harrow and wherenot. John Kipling was bound for Wellington.

On a bright summer's day we left in the old horse-drawn brake, and the only person I was glad to say good-bye to was the headmaster.

## CHAPTER THREE

THE next four years of my life were a complete waste of time, in which I learnt nothing of the slightest use to me in after-life, except to dislike the system that goes by the name of the Public School system most intensely. I was twelve when I first went, and the youngest boy in the school. The things that were really important at Eton, and for lack of knowledge of which corporal punishment was inflicted, were as follows:

1. No one, other than members of "Pop" (the Eton society composed of the chief athletes of the school and the Head of the school—who was a scholarship boy—and the Captain of the Oppidans—the Head of the non-scholarship part of the school) was allowed to roll up his umbrella.

2. No one but a member of "Pop," the Sixth Form, the "Upper Boat Choices" (2nd rowing eight) and the "Twenty-two" (or 2nd cricket eleven) was allowed to turn down the collar of his blazer or overcoat.

3. No one was to walk arm-in-arm except "Pop."

4. No one could walk on the left side of the Eton High Street on the way to Windsor.

5. No one could put sealing-wax on his top hat but a member of "Pop." (Why anyone should want to is somewhat extraordinary, but "Pop" did.)

6. No one outside of "Pop" or the Sixth Form could

wear soft shirts with his "tails." This was altered during the war.

7. No one was allowed to button the bottom button of his waistcoat. This was most important.

These might be described as Eton's seven points, and were the key to the whole system.

Anyway, a boy having learnt those seven points was considered eminently suitable to be a member of the ruling class and qualified to see that the lower orders behaved themselves.

Of course there were plenty of other things that could not be done, and nobody in my day ever questioned anything. As to myself, the whole place seemed so incredibly stupid that I remained throughout my Eton days in a constant state of amazement. It is always held that these institutions prepare a boy for after-life and teach character. Let us examine these two points. They teach us the team spirit, they say—no man for himself and all for the team: the whole rather than the individual. But, what earthly good is that, when, the moment a boy is launched into the outside world on his own, his whole existence depends on individual competition, which is looked upon as one of the finest qualities in the capitalist system, and the main difference between it and Socialism. A most incredible anachronism. Now what about character? Public Schools teach that games are more important than work, that those who are good at games are good fellows, and those that are good at work are "saps" and therefore to be laughed at. Whereupon the herd turns on the worker and his life is made miserable. The character, I suppose, coming out when the persecuted boy finishes his school time without committing suicide.

Then again the almost limitless power of "Captains of the Games" at Eton to beat boys who do not play football well enough to please the watchers produces a fine character in whom? The beater or the beaten? Perhaps the essence of character is to call the local inhabitants "scugs" and to rag the shop people who serve the boys behind counters. This character business is quoted when some old boy distinguishes himself in after-life, when his Eton training is put down as the cause of his success. The fact that the individual started at the top of the ladder, of wealthy parents, with a good home, an established position and all the advantages of birth and wealth never seems to enter into the argument at all. And why the influence of home and family tradition (which is always referred to in other cases) should be entirely put in the background in favour of four or five years spent in running after a football, is perfectly incomprehensible to the average mind.

An instance of the effect of this training is well illustrated in a report of the Harrow School mission camp, 1928:

" . . . Their presence (i.e., the presence of Harrovians) also serves for a short period in the year to show people (i.e., in Latimer Road, London, where the mission is situated) who otherwise never see or hear other than their own code of play, how to be sportsmen."

Another old cry that comes up in cracked voices from aged minds is that of "playing the game." Now this "game" simply means doing things as they have been done for the past hundred years. The game is not of your choosing. The rules are not of your making. You have no say in it at all. The game is simply the old idea of the dead upper classes as to what the living upper class are to

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do in all circumstances and in all centuries. Some of the rules of this game are as follows:

1. *Noblesse oblige*, which, being interpreted, means when you have £10,000 a year you can give twopence to a beggar once, but if he asks you a second time he is not "playing the game," so you win.

2. Never kick a man when he is down. You can push him down if you like and sit on him, or get someone else to do the kicking, but you must not do it yourself or you lose.

3. Never shoot a fox. They prefer being hunted by dogs<sup>1</sup> and torn to pieces.

4. *Esprit de corps*. Has nothing to do with the body or the O.T.C. It means thinking a hell of a lot about this "game" business.

5. Always thrash a man if he runs after your wife. If you run after his, be a co-respondent.

6. Anyone who runs down your "game" (which includes the Public School system) is not playing the "game," and as in your "game" everyone *ought* to play it if he is a "gentleman," you win by sheer weight of numbers.

7. Don't hit anyone smaller than yourself unless he is alone and you are three or four to one. This is important when ragging smaller boys' rooms at school.

Of course there are other rules, but I think those are the chief ones.

Referring to games, I have already said that in my day they were the be-all and end-all of Eton existence. When I was a Lower boy we were warned by the Captain of the

<sup>1</sup> You are in danger of losing a point or two here. You should say "hounds" not "dogs."

Games in our house that we should be beaten if we did not win a certain match. Encouraged by this we struggled about in the mud for about an hour and managed to win. That night the whole team except the captain was beaten for not having won by enough points.

Other things for which we were beaten were not knowing the rules of the Eton Field Game by heart, not knowing the different house colours, and being last when someone or other called "boy" because he wanted a fag.

On one occasion the whole house except the first ten were beaten because someone had written something or other on the walls of the lavatory. We had a strong suspicion at the time that this was arranged for fun. One boy was beaten three nights in succession, and his bottom was like a butcher's shop. He is a captain now in the Army, but, of course, if he had not had this valuable character-training he would only have been a lieutenant.

In all I was beaten about six times in two years. I do not know what has happened to our champion beater. I expected him to win the war all on his own when he got out to France, but I believe the opportunity was denied him, as I have been told he was in the A.S.C.

At the age of fourteen there was a great to-do about confirmation. One night my house-master came into my room and told me I was to be confirmed. I asked him why. His explanation was that everyone should be. I objected. He protested mildly. I continued to object and said I did not believe in it. He replied it was hardly a question of whether I believed in it or not. I said I could not see what it had to do with anyone else. He went out. I was not confirmed. The only effect confirmation had on my acquaintances—I say acquaintances with reason, for my



own house (but not the rest of the school) was *hominibus plenum, amicis vacuum* for me—was to make them temporarily prudish and afterwards desirous of making up for it.

We had chapel once a day and twice on Sundays. Lower Chapel was a dull and ugly building, but Upper Chapel was more interesting. We learnt our "saying<sup>1</sup> lessons" during the service, or played marbles up and down the benches. There were constantly preachers begging for foreign missions, and occasionally someone would faint. I never heard a sermon that meant anything to me. I knew nothing of Christ's life. Divinity lessons were full of Esau and Jehus. The fascinating story of the early Christians and their communal life was never taught to me.

There was a great deal of "ragging" in my house of certain boys, of whom I was one. As I was the youngest in the house by almost a year, for my first two terms I was an easy prey. I do not think there was anything special they had against me, except that I liked reading books and was no good at games, and I do not think the raggers were intentionally cruel. Nevertheless, their methods were cunning.

Should some poor wretch be at work at the desk in his room, hurried whispering outside the door would prepare him for the worst, and, true to the animal instinct, he would back to the wall. Three or four boys would then enter. A jug of water quickly put out the fire; his books would be thrown on the floor; his clothes scattered over the room and then out they would go and on to the next. In one case my parents' photographs were even spat upon.

<sup>1</sup> Latin verse to be learnt by heart and repeated in school.

I suppose had I hit one of them hard on the head with a cricket bat it would not have happened again, but I was too small and too frightened. The agony of waiting for this sort of thing night after night was not conducive to work but, after all, was it not to teach character and all part of this "game" business?

Other boys suffered more than I did, for they took it to heart. I knew it was only a matter of time and that the nightmare would pass. It did, and many of those concerned are dead, and though I bear no malice, still I think such things should not be tolerated. Many a boy's spirit may be broken, and his qualities and talents be thereby stunted, and it is because of that, and what I have seen and know of, that ragging at schools or in the Services is the one thing now that makes me leap enthusiastically into battle.

Fagging as a system is another fatuous institution. If a fag is badly treated he will look forward to the time when he can repay his score on some other little fellow. If he is well treated and does not know what a burden a fag's life can be, he will pooh-pooh the stories of such things and be incapable of redressing matters. I cannot see what good it does to "character" for a boy who, dropping the book he happens to be reading, calls "boy," and tells the last fag who arrives to pick the book up. This actual incident happened in my house, before I came, but was always quoted as a great joke, and the fag-master was rather a "fine fellow" because of it.

Making toast at the kitchen fire with some twelve others as quickly as possible, and having your toast pushed into the fire to "rag" you, is not amusing when you are beaten for scraping the black off the burnt bread by your fag-master. Yet this was also considered a great joke.

It may be said that all this is the worst side of the system. That may be so, but it is the side I have best reason for remembering. It is the side that makes the impression, and I have no hesitation in saying that even if it is the worst side only that I have touched upon, such things should not have been tolerated by the authorities. I believe things are much better since the war, but those are my memories and as such are stated as they happened.

As regards the learning side of Eton, the curriculum was pitiable. I did a year of Greek, three years of Latin, three years of mathematics, four years of Divinity, four years of French, one year of German, which last subject was exceedingly well taught by one of the more enlightened of the Eton masters of my day, to whom I shall always be grateful. As regards history, I remember doing hardly any after I ceased to be a Lower boy, and I do not remember having a single geography lesson after that time. Economics, Philosophy, Psychology, Ethics, Civics, European History—nil. I never heard of Georgia as a separate people, country and language till I went there. Logic I had only one term of, and that as a special subject under the headmaster, Edward Lyttleton, one of the best of men. A smattering of geology and physics—but no electricity—was also taught me as a Lower boy.

The education of the scholars, I believe, was better; but there was one element in the election of those boys that I consider entirely wrong. It was open to any boy to compete for an Eton Foundation scholarship however rich his parents might be. This meant that if a boy from a wealthy family passed into College (instead of as an Oppidan) he might thereby debar a boy of much poorer parenthood, whose only reason for failing was the limited

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number of vacancies to be competed for. For boys of wealthy parents to compete at all for those positions when they could just as well be Oppidan members of the school appears to me to be exceedingly unfair, and surely completely defeats the object of the scholarship.

During the summer of 1913 I suffered from boils and had to go to the doctor to have one lanced. It was on my chin, and during the little operation the doctor remarked: "You've got the pluck of the devil." I only tell this story because it celebrates the first word of encouragement I had ever heard in my whole life, and from that day I have never forgotten it. Whether it was true or not I remember he hurt me very much, but the fact of his saying it laid the foundations of confidence in myself that I never had before. Thank you, Dr. Amsler.

I was younger than most of my friends as I was always the youngest in my form during my four years, and my friends were mostly in my own form. When I became a language specialist, during my last year, I spent a great deal of time in the school library, where I read voraciously, chiefly biographies and books on philosophy, besides much verse. We were quite a little fraternity in the library, and in 1915 we published a book of contemporary Eton Verse which, I believe, was the first of its kind from Eton. Some of the contributors were killed in the war, including a scholar named Rhys Davids, who became one of our best flying men. I forget if Sacheverell Sitwell contributed to the little book, but he was often in the library in those days. One of our fraternity became Italian interpreter to the British Delegation at the Genoa Conference in later years; but it was not at Eton that he learnt that language.

Looking back, it seems almost incredible to realize that

many of those I knew were killed before they were twenty-one. One of the earliest to fall had been the first boy in our house to win the Military Cross, and I well remember the incredulity with which the news of his award was received by the house-master and the rest of the house. For this boy had been hopeless at games and had never gained his "shorts."<sup>1</sup> How was it possible, we wondered? But these false values are the essence of Public School life, and this false value was the first of a series of shocks when one by one the idols of my past training crashed to the ground.

The wisdom of age, the importance of conventions, the not running before you can walk, this "playing the game" business. Why, before I was twenty-one the old men of Europe, with the wisdom of age, had killed ten millions; working-class men, without Public School training, had become brigadier-generals of the great British class-ridden Army; boys of nineteen, running before they could walk, were commanding companies of soldiers in the hardest fighting the world had ever seen; and the British nation, "playing the game," had broken its pledges to Armenia and Assyria, and changed two protectorates into Crown Colonies.

I wonder if boys still believe those things, and whether the war and its aftermath has taught parents and schools anything. I rather fear that English people are like the old Russian aristocracy who learnt nothing from the 1905 rebellion; or like the British Army who thought the Boer War would be a replica of the Crimea and the Great War similar to South Africa. I understand the Army still believes the next European War will be won by the cavalry

<sup>1</sup> Showing membership of the house football eleven.

and a few advances in extended order by the infantry. I do not.

This brings me to the O.T.C. as it was when I was at Eton. One hour's parade per week and periodical field-days. It was the only thing I was keen on, but as promotion entirely depended upon your athletic standing in your house or the fact you were in the Sixth Form, there was no sense in my taking it too seriously.

The whole thing was ridiculous, anyway, since those who attempted to take it seriously were soon "ragged" out of their attitude. All the same, joining the O.T.C. was as compulsory as a non-compulsory organization can be, and that means merely compulsory.

I attended one camp, the memorable 1914 one when we were at Tidworth Pennings. I remember so well the excitement when the Army was mobilized and the O.T.C. sent home. Out of our tent of eight, two were killed before the war was to end. The rumours that ran round the camp—that Asquith had been shot and the Kaiser committed suicide. The whole camp was in feverish excitement, but as the war would be over in a few weeks most of us realized we should not stand a chance of getting out to this great football match. Nevertheless the commander of our camp was killed before Christmas, being in the first batch to go out.

The camp immediately broke up and I arrived home unexpectedly, having travelled in my uniform, proud of it for the first time, but rather disturbed because it was not khaki but rose-grey like the kilt of the London Scottish.

Mobilization had, of course, been ordered before we sent Germany the ultimatum that was to end at midnight on the 4th of August, and I remember walking down to

the village post-office with my eldest sister to wait for the news. No news came through and we did not know till the next morning

This did not interfere with me much. Everyone had been told it would all be over by Christmas, and so I threw myself into a plan that I and a friend (who has since become my brother-in-law) had devised at Eton; namely of forming a cricket club for all Public School boys in Worcestershire who were under the age of twenty. This club we called the Viginti, and its colours were very beautiful. We played some good games that summer and the next, but after that the Army claimed me (or rather I claimed it) and I lost touch. I believe the club went on for some years afterwards, and it may still be in existence for all I know. We drew up some very important rules, one of which amused the parents very much. It was to the effect that the colours (the scarf, the blazer and the hat-band) could be worn by all members, but that if that person were dismissed from the club he was to wear nothing.

My cousin, John Kipling, was commissioned into the newly formed second battalion of the Irish Guards very soon after the declaration, and I was rather jealous of him. He had a gold-braided cap, too, which made things even worse.

There was not much change at Eton when we returned, except for the absence of so many who, in ordinary times, would have still been there; merely a kind of atmosphere of expectancy, a feeling that here, at last, was something worth while. I want to stress this point because history books in the future will probably talk a lot of humbug about this subject.

When the first wave of emotionalism and flag-waving

subsided, as it did in the winter of 1914, a desire to be in the show took its place, and this lasted for at least three years and was the prerogative of youth.

When gas attacks started we were all served out with a bottle of acid and a small respirator to be worn over the mouth, but we never had occasion to use them. The O.T.C. paraded twice a week but did nothing very exciting. Several masters joined up, and the first gang of "dug-outs" arrived as teachers. These old fellows, I discovered later, were very similar in outlook and mentality to their brothers who rejoined the Army. One or two Belgian boys came into the school at this time, and other refugees were billeted in the town.

I spent several mornings polishing up my French with a Belgian, much to the annoyance of certain members of my house who thought I should be playing cricket or rowing on the river; but by that time I was impervious to such criticism.

Owing to the fact that nearly all my friends were leaving at the end of the summer of 1915 and that I was heartily tired of wasting time and learning nothing, I asked my parents whether I, too, could not leave then; being determined, if they refused, to run away and join up as one or two other boys had already done. After some hesitation it was agreed that I should leave at the end of the summer.

My last term, because of my excitement at the possibility of joining up, was my happiest, and when I learnt that I was to leave at the end of it my joy was complete. Some six or seven language specialists had been doing logic with the headmaster in his own house during the term, and I came to know Edward Lyttleton quite well, for a boy.



Therefore when I went to receive my "leaving book" we had quite a long conversation.

He told me I would always regret leaving so young—I was only sixteen—and that Eton was the happiest time of my life. Now, sixteen years later, I can tell him that he was wrong in both cases. I have never been more pleased to leave anywhere, except prison, than I was to leave Eton, and the four years I spent there were the most useless and unhappy years of my life up till then.

## CHAPTER FOUR

As it seemed impossible for the war to last long enough for me to take part in it, and as at this time I had leanings towards the Diplomatic Service as a profession, it was thought advisable to send me to Brighton, where I spent six months with a tutor, doing English and German. I used to ride a horse on the downs as a recreation, and rode a motor-bicycle about the country. I was given a white feather by a woman on the West Pier one day, of which I was very proud, since I had no idea I looked old enough to be a soldier. As soon as I was seventeen efforts were made, by back-stair methods, to obtain a commission for me; but the open door to commissions at seventeen had been closed and the age limit raised. It was then decided that I should try for Sandhurst, and as I knew little mathematics I went to another tutor in Kensington for a month or two, but on receiving my Sandhurst papers it was discovered that I was still a year too young for the examinations.

There seemed to be no way out but to enlist, when suddenly it was found that the Cambridge O.T.C. had become a kind of early form of Cadet Battalion, and there ex-N.C.O.'s and unenlisted youths could qualify for commissioned rank by service therein.

In May I went down to Cambridge, received a medical

examination, obtained a uniform, and began my military life, full of hope and happiness.

The Cambridge O.T.C. at that time was but one company strong and consisted of ex-N.C.O.'s, two of whom had been in the Dardanelles, a few ex-privates, and the rest a collection of untrained men and youths whose ages ranged from seventeen to forty. It was an adjunct of the newly formed Cadet Battalions of which Nos. 2 and 5 were quartered in the different colleges. Our company paraded at Pembroke and soon we were in the midst of intensive training. We dug trenches on the Gogs, and did physical training on the Leys School football ground, and manœuvres all round the countryside. We spent happy evenings at the local cinemas and public-houses, and enjoyed ourselves hugely. I became surprisingly keen and warlike. The life suited me, and I revelled in physical training and bayonet fighting. No one jerked his head at "backward bend" with more keenness than I, or jabbed straw sacks with a bayonet more ferociously. Full knee bend and "on the hands down," agony to some, was pleasure to me.

For the first month I was in Trinity College, in rooms over the archway on the second floor opposite the Dean. These rooms had belonged to an undergraduate who was a conscientious objector, and pamphlets and cartoons were all over the room. In fury I burnt them. There was also a Don in the College of the same persuasion, and I had an argument with the Dean as to the propriety of allowing such a "worm" to remain in the precincts. The Dean replied that the said Don had saved a child from drowning in the Cam and was very brave. I did not understand how that could be possible, and anyway was not that a proof that his services could be better used else-

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where? I was very rude to the Dean; but then we military did not think much of civilians then. The Master of Trinity was so moved by the presence of so many gallant men in his town that he used to take off his cap to every soldier he met in his College. This was very gratifying and showed that he, at any rate, knew his place.

The only military subject that caused me any difficulty was map-reading which, because of its mathematics, left me quite cold. I mention this because it is of importance in view of what was to follow. The summer of 1916 was a most glorious one; sun and little rain. Boating on the river in the evenings was as near Paradise for me as I could then imagine. Several of our fellows had their wives and families in the town, and our social life was fairly gay in consequence.

In July I left Trinity and moved to billets in Fitzwilliam Street, which were full of my friends. I had a gramophone and many records, and the landladies must have felt our intrusion into their well-ordered lives as exceedingly strange. We came in and went out when we liked, for the University control did not apply to us, of course.

In August the adjutant told six of us to stay behind after parade one day, of which number I was one. He then addressed us.

"We are starting training on last week's batch of recruits to-morrow and we are short of instructors," he said. "Is there anyone amongst you who knows anything of map-reading?"

There was a silence. I took a pace to the front.

"I do, sir," I said.

"Right; then you'll take the recruits in map-reading to-morrow at ten a.m. Dismiss."

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So there we were. I did not go out that evening. From six o'clock till after midnight I worked at that subject. I read and read and read, and that which I did not understand I memorized.

At ten o'clock the next morning the recruits were marched into one of the lecture rooms and, with the adjutant listening, I lectured for an hour. I drew pictures on the blackboard; I asked questions; in fact, I enjoyed myself properly. This was my first chance and I took it. The next day I was in battalion orders as a corporal. The afternoon parade saw me with two stripes upon both arms, and from then till December I trained recruits. By October I had mastered map-reading, and gave one or two lectures to the 2nd Cadet Battalion, where all the cadets were ex-N.C.O.'s and most of them had been to France or Gallipoli. They tried their best to catch me out, but they never succeeded. I trained many batches of recruits and took them right through their course: drill, musketry, bayonet fighting, P.T., advance guards, trench digging, bombing, etc.

In the winter we played football, which I enjoyed. It was a-game at last and no longer an agony.

When I became expert in map-reading I invented a method of teaching contours which I still think is better than the "potato" or the "bath" methods, and because I believe it is the best method I will recount it.

Find a solid pile of stones or earth or refuse more or less of a conical shape and assemble your class around it.

With a ball of string you tie circles of string, loosely and of equal depth one from the other, around the mound, starting from the top. This leaves you with a mound encircled by white string—each circle being entirely

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separate. Then, one by one, you make the class stand on top of the mound and look down. He thereupon sees contours as they are drawn on a map. When he understands this, he descends and lies on his stomach, looking towards the mound, when he sees the same thing in elevation. I found this method successful when everything else had failed.

The 2nd Cadet Battalion Companies arranged a marching and shooting competition wherein we had a team, of which I was a member. We were to be inspected and our full kits weighed, to march eight miles, to be again inspected, to fire at targets, stationary, moving, and disappearing, slow fire and rapid fire, and then once more inspected. We won the competition, thanks largely to the magnificent shooting of one of our fellows named Lutter, and we thereby won a cup and a silver medal each, presented by Rudyard Kipling.

In November I was made a sergeant, and in December was transferred to the 2nd Cadet Battalion as staff-sergeant-instructor. That meant three stripes and a crown, a shiny belt that clinked at every step and, to make things better still, I had two little steel plates fitted to the inside of my heels so that I could make a fine noise when I saluted. I thought a great deal of myself then. Although I was sorry to leave the O.T.C., here was stronger meat to chew. My brother sergeants were the best of fellows, and we had many a good spree. About this time the order came in abolishing compulsory moustachios, and also one adding sixpence a day to the pay of staff-sergeants.

One of the first jobs I had was to arrest a soldier who had failed to salute an officer. I and another staff-sergeant caught the man at the railway station. He was rather

violent, so we locked him in the waiting-room and went for the Military Police. Just before they arrived he broke the window and escaped. He was caught later, I believe.

The winter of 1916 was very cold, and we had plenty of skating. So hard was the frost that I skated from the University skating ground, up Silver Street and Trumington Street, to my billets, the whole way by road.

I had a certain amount of difficulty with my new platoon, who were quartered in Peterhouse, since most of them had come back from the front and were much older than I. They were rather indignant that one so young should have charge of their training. This was apparent in several ways, and I took steps to deal with it. I managed to get the sergeant-major to let me take the whole company for company drill as often as possible, my brother staff-sergeants being only too pleased to have the morning off. The reason I did this was because an entirely new method of company drill had just come out and none of the staff-sergeants had learnt it but I. This I explained to the company, and in a week or two I found that there was keen rivalry between the platoons as to who had the best instructor. From that moment I had no trouble at all, and we had a great time together. I published at this time a small, talc-covered card with the new orders for company and platoon drill on it. This was very useful for instruction, and I allowed the cadets to hold it in the left hand under the rifle butt whilst they were learning. The 2nd Cadet Battalion had a hockey team in which I played outside right, and as we had two Internationals in the team we beat all comers, as far as I remember, in the whole Eastern Command. I was no expert with the stick, but as I could run very fast at that time I was fairly successful.

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I once took the whole battalion for battalion drill on Parker's Piece, and thoroughly enjoyed myself. It was considered an honour to the platoon and they were proud of it, I was told. Looking back, I remember them as the finest collection of fellows I have ever had to deal with; but many of them were to fall, including the company commander, Captain Wooton of the Suffolks, and the second in command, E. A. Mackintosh of the Black Watch, the war poet.

I had one or two odd jobs whilst I was at Cambridge. One was to train a party of Public School masters during their summer holidays. As these men were all over forty it was a case of kill or cure, and I must say it was quite good fun doubling those ushers up and down hill on a hot day. They were very keen, and nothing was too hard for them. We got on very well together. One of them was W. W. Lowe of Malvern College, the old Oxford and Worcestershire cricketer.

The other job was to "chase" a squad of conscientious objectors. This I did effectively, and they bore it very well; but if there is any member of that squad who reads these lines will he accept my humble apologies for the treatment I meted out to them. I treated them badly, and I am ashamed of myself for it; but I was excessively ignorant then both of Christianity and of Capitalism and the causes of war.

The object of the new company was to instil into line regiments the methods of the Brigade of Guards, and there was much criticism of the stamping and turning movements which the Line did not approve of. The stamping part was therefore not insisted upon.

The whole of this time I was increasing in self-



confidence. I discovered I could do things, and the nightmare of Eton faded into insignificance before this wider and more important world. In Battalion Headquarters one day I came upon a Barr and Stroud range-finder which no one seemed to know anything about, so I spent the evening on the instructions, learnt the technical and optical part by heart, and suggested to the company commander that we should try some range-finding in competition with distance judging. This we did. Those days were different from days as an officer, for we were encouraged to know as much as possible; later, as an officer in the Brigade of Guards, I was to discover that you should not know any more than necessary for the particular rank you might hold.

I think the atmosphere of Cambridge was very beneficial to the cadets. Most of them had been shattered in great or small degree by the war, especially those that came from the Somme, and the peace and beauty of the place was a wonderful tonic to the fellows. I am godfather to the daughter of one of my platoon who was an ex-sergeant-major of the P.P.C.L.I., and he and one other I still keep in touch with.

The course was four months, but I left before I could see my platoon through to the end, for a few days after my eighteenth birthday I was sent myself as a cadet to the newly formed Household Brigade Cadet Battalion at Bushey.

Here we were all ex-petty officers of the R.N.D., sergeant-majors, sergeants, corporals or privates, except one or two who were from Public School O.T.C.'s, and as we had now become cadets we parted regretfully from our stripes and crowns. When we arrived the place was in disorder and very uncomfortable, there being a great

lack of furniture and equipment. I was in No. 1 platoon, wherein no one had been less than a sergeant. The staff, both officers and N.C.O.'s, were all Brigade of Guards, and I soon saw that this was to be run more regimentally than the other Cadet Battalions. The method of giving commands was different from the Line; the method of punishment was different. In the line regiments N.C.O.'s had been used to swearing at a man and that was the end of it as regards small offences. In the Brigade of Guards there is no swearing as we knew it; all offences, however trivial, are "put in the book," and the man appears the following day before his company commander. Personally I preferred, and still prefer, the line method; since punishments hanging over you like a sword of Damocles are never very pleasant, and you soon get used to being sworn at. We had plenty of work with scrubbing out the rooms, spitting and polishing, kit inspections and the ordinary training routine, and the time passed agreeably enough. We had one small mutiny as a result of too much "doubling" on an early morning parade. The affair, however, was passed off tactfully. I was made permanent cadet platoon sergeant of No. 1 platoon, and did some instruction when sergeants were few.

A whole trench system was dug on a neighbouring golf-links, and we were kept very busy. One of our cadets, an old soldier in mind and age, was constantly being harried by the sergeants. One day he was promised a "wet shirt" on the morrow, which meant that he was to be especially "chased."

The following day we were at trench digging when the order came to take off jackets. Everyone did so except the old soldier, who worked on unconcerned. A repeated

order, shouted especially for him, forced him slowly to take off his jacket, when it was seen that he had nothing on underneath. On being asked by the officer the reason for this he replied: "The sergeant promised me a wet shirt to-day, and no sergeant has ever had the better of me yet." He won his point and was later an officer in the same regiment as I. This same fellow organized a mock court martial of myself for not having done something or other, and it was held after lights out. It ended rather tamely with a verdict of no charge, but it was not serious and led to no trouble.

We did some very long route marches in wet weather, and spent a week under canvas, which was not enjoyable.

Five or six of us hired a room in the lodge of the grounds, where we spent many happy hours with music and song. Expeditions to a café in Watford were about the only other recreation there was, and there a feminine orchestra was eternally playing "Underneath the Stars."

This is the tune that is associated in my mind with Bushey, as "Way down in Tennessee" and songs from "The Bing Boys" are associated with Cambridge. I seem to remember while I was at Cambridge being able to see several shows on a Saturday in London. The one I remember best was at the Ambassadors with Morris Harvey, Delysia, Morton, Dorothy Minto and Nat D. Ayer. It was called "Pell Mell," and I had the privilege of meeting Delysia, whom I looked upon then, as I do now, as a very great artist. "The Bing Boys" I visited frequently, and the last time was with a very great friend of mine who was in serious domestic trouble. He left for France the next day and was killed later.

My old friend the Barr and Stroud arrived during this

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course, and I lectured on it with the commanding officer watching. As he did not know anything about it I was quite safe, but as I had forgotten the more technical part, some very adroit questioning from scientific minds amongst the class nearly threw me off my balance.

At the end of the third month about twenty of us were told to sit for a passing-out examination, of which I was one. The papers were all fairly simple, and I experienced no difficulty with them. My amazement and, I may say, that of the rest of the battalion, was great when it was learned that I and only one other had failed. So amazed was I that I caught the commanding officer alone shortly after and asked him to tell me why I had failed. He made some reference to my youth and passed on. To this day I am convinced that I did not fail, but that I was considered to be one of those who "thought they knew too much," and that, of course, in those circles is a crime. Many years later I hear that my conviction was correct.

Anyway, there was nothing to be gained by taking it to heart. I was still full of confidence and, though sorry to say farewell to the fellows who were going, I threw myself into the last month of the regular course, still cadet-sergeant of my depleted platoon.

Some of us decided to publish a magazine to celebrate the first course of the new Cadet Battalion, and I got several promises of support from literary and artistic-minded soldiers. I worked very hard at this, writing and designing a decorative first page. As time wore on and contributors did not come in, I was forced to do more than my agreed share, and the magazine made its appearance about a week before the end of the course.

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In June we had another examination, and the whole of us passed out without exception.

We said good-bye with heart-felt regrets, and within the next few months many of these good fellows had passed from this life, and more—many more—were to follow in the retreat of the following March.

I spent some time in London getting together the necessary uniform and waiting to be gazetted; passing a week or two with the Kiplings at Burwash, which had become a sort of second home, if not a first.

I did not have to join my regiment till August, but my commission was ante-dated to June, 1917.

I had enjoyed my time as a N.C.O. and a cadet, and now a new phase of life was to open—a new milieu was to be entered—a new set of people to meet and know. I had been successful, and things had become easy for me. I felt the clouds lifting. I was sure of myself—too sure, I discovered, some people thought—and I was ready for anything.

## CHAPTER FIVE

THE reserve battalion of the Irish Guards was in camp at Tadworth, and thither I repaired.

The very first day I put my "foot right into it," and the mistake was to follow me for many months. It happened like this.

All newly joined officers were meant to attend commanding officers' "Orders" when punishment for serious offences was meted. I attended. Amongst the cases was a man awaiting trial by court martial for some serious offence or other. Having been asked if he had anything to say, the man begged that he might be allowed to see the Manual of Military Law and King's Regulations. The officer-in-charge told him he had not got either, and ordered the prisoner to be marched out. When the orders were over I waited behind and saluted.

What did I want?

"I have a Manual of Military Law and King's Regulations; can I lend them to the prisoner, sir?" This I said in all innocence, firstly because I thought the officer had really neither of those books with him in camp, and secondly because I knew that by military law a prisoner awaiting court martial was entitled to those two books.

Well, the tent nearly fell down. The officer leapt to his feet. Who was I? Had not I only just joined?

How did I dare? Did I think he had not got those books? Was not I the sort of person who thought I knew everything? And so on. He then turned to the adjutant and, telling him to see I was put in my proper place, I was ordered out. A subaltern, newly transferred from a line regiment, who had already had two Military Crosses, was highly amused at my tale and told me there were many things that happened here that were different from those to which we had been accustomed. My amazement wore off in time, and for the next few weeks the adjutant did his best to make things as unpleasant as possible; but when he told me, as I was drilling a squad, that I did not know the least thing about drilling men, I realized he either did not know a word about it himself or that he had been told to behave like this, so I did not worry.

When the tale of my tactlessness had gone round the mess, one of the captains remarked in an undertone to the adjutant that he had heard I had written a book about drill. This, of course, was not true, but referred, I suppose, to the card I had published at Cambridge. Anyway, that also was a crime and went seriously against me.

We left Tadworth shortly afterwards for barracks at Warley in Essex, and there I stayed, watching draft after draft leaving for France, waiting until I was old enough to go myself.

This persecution business completely subsided after a time, and I threw myself into my duties with enthusiasm; and during my sojourn at Warley, from September, 1917, to March, 1918, I did courses on almost every military subject, including sanitation and wiring, some in London and some at other centres. While on a course at Chelsea

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Barracks I happened to be in the Savoy at the time the bomb was dropped by Cleopatra's Needle, and I went out at once to see the damage and the remains of the tramcar that looked like a nutmeg-grater. I was interested in the heads of the passengers which had been thrown into the road by the bomb that had decapitated nearly all of them.

We were a cheery crowd at Warley in spite of one or two contretemps with the authorities. Officers and men came and went, and many said good-bye to Warley for the last time. The farewell words of the commanding officer to the draft, the drums and fifes playing the regimental march and "Auld Lang Syne," and the waving of hands, made me very sad and miserable that I was too young to go with them.

I spent a month at Caterham doing signalling in February, and during these weeks I organized a concert, which was very successful; the variety of turns being quite exceptional, since many of the soldiers were actors or music-hall people in peace time. As a result of having gone in for signalling, which was the longest and most difficult course in the Army, I was sent to the Signal School at Dunstable for a three months' course, unfortunately, just at the time when I became eligible for the front. I was annoyed at this, but as the commanding officer, who by this time had become quite affable to me, said that a qualified signalling officer would be sure to run a good chance of becoming adjutant, I was appeased.

We had a great time at Dunstable, although there was plenty of work to do. We waved flags, banged shutters and lamps, twinkled helios, buzzed telegraphs and power-buzzers, flew pigeons and examined accumulators. There were several hundred there at the time, officers and men,



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and we lived a gay life. There were only two officers of the Brigade of Guards at Dunstable during my time, a Coldstreamer and myself, and although there was a certain amount of the usual antagonism towards us it did not last long, and we were a most happy course.

We finished in May and I passed out with a first-class certificate, but had I worked I might have secured honours. As it turned out, it made not the slightest difference to me, for after Dunstable I did no more signalling for the rest of my Army career, although in France I was the only qualified signal officer in the battalion. It used to make me miserable to see our incompetent old signal sergeant in battle after battle taking no care to ensure communication and getting runner after runner killed. I once asked that I might be allowed to organize the signals properly, but was merely politely told to mind my own business.

When the Dunstable course was over I went on "leave prior to embarkation" and set off for the Kiplings' at Burwash. Here I spent a happy time waiting for the telegrams that would send me to France. I must say here that I had imagined what the war would be like, but the only things I could not quite realize were dead men and blood. Therefore, from as far back as 1915 I had spent whatever time I could with butchers, watching animals being slaughtered until I became used to it. I also went twice to see the corpses of men who had been drowned, and in 1915 I had been allowed to help put a suicide-by-drowning case into his coffin. I was very much interested, and soon realized there was nothing very extraordinary about dead bodies, although undertakers do their best to make corpses look ridiculous with the frilled shirt front and white tie with which they cover them up.

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One afternoon whilst I was paddling in the pond and the sun was shining its happiest, the telegram arrived. I capered round the lawn with joy, for at last the great adventure had begun. One of the family had fallen. I was the avenger. I never thought for a minute of being killed. That seemed quite impossible; and I left Burwash, still in high spirits, for London, where I gathered my kit ready for the morrow. That evening my father asked me what I should like done in my memory should I not come back. I was very much surprised at this, and suggested alms-houses or a working-men's club.<sup>1</sup> He promised it should be done. I said good-bye to my mother in bed when I left early in the morning for Victoria, and my father came and saw me off from the doorstep of 93 Eaton Square in his shirt-sleeves.

About six officers of my regiment were at the station, and as we had no draft to take out we were free to enjoy ourselves. We dined at Boulogne and went straight up the line, slowly and haltingly, hearing the first round of firing at Etaples, which was being bombed as usual. We detrained eventually at Salty and made our way to Pommier, which was our battalion reserve. Here my first job was to go up to the line and bring back an officer who was under arrest. It was a quiet part of the line when I went up, and I watched the shells with interest as they burst. That is the first stage—merely interest. A few days later we came out to rest at Berles-au-Bois where our second battalion lay, and where we stayed all June while the Engineers and other regiments dug trenches three and four miles behind the reserve line, for we were expecting another big push.

<sup>1</sup> My father gave me a club-house in Stourport after the war which I handed over to the ex-service men, who still use it.

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Divisional sports were held at Humbercamp, and I rode over with a friend in the second battalion. On our way back my horse chose to put his fore-feet suddenly in a shallow trench rather than jump it, and consequently I had to ride home with a sprained wrist, to the accompaniment of roars of laughter from W.C.M., who explained how funny I looked turning somersaults.

I produced a concert at Berles-au-Bois, but the commanding officer would not let any officers perform. I also spent a "details week" on a howitzer course with the gunners.

At the end of June we moved up into reserve at Bailleulemont, and it was here that one of our battalion was shot by a firing party of the Coldstream behind my billet. I was awakened by the volley and learnt the details afterwards. This made a profound impression on me, especially as the men said he was a brave fellow. It was a case of "an example-must be made." The memory of that early morning was revived when the House of Commons abolished the Army death penalty for all cases except treachery, in 1930.

The 1st Guards Brigade was all in or around the village, and we saw a lot of each other.

When the battalion moved up to take over battalion reserve and finally the front line, I went as second in command to No. 1 Company, and from that day till I went on leave in November I never had a day out of the reserve or front line as long as the battalion was forward. It became quite a joke in the company that they wanted to have me killed. I should mention in explanation that the adjutant was a great personal friend of the one who had "chased" me on the square at Tadworth. He had a habit of doing everything he could to annoy and irritate not only

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me but two or three other junior officers, and when he was wounded in October the battalion was much relieved.

The first time I went up to the front line it was raining cats and dogs, and as we neared the support I heard what I thought to be the hiss of escaping gas. To my apprehensive remarks on the subject my company commander, A.W.L.P., the best of men, slowly answered that it was the swish of machine-gun bullets.

We spent July in and out from the front line to reserve and back again, but on the whole it was a quiet sector except for an hour or so every evening—that is, until the Americans came.

I used to enjoy the night patrols along the wire—remember these were early days and I had as yet seen no fighting—and my ambition was to reach a German 'plane that a few weeks before had crashed between the two lines. It was lucky I never got there, for after we advanced an R.E. came to look at the 'plane and was blown to pieces by a booby trap. Owing to the fact that I preferred to take the night duty in a long stretch and therefore have more time to sleep in the day, I wrote home for some snuff, which tailors in the east of London take to keep themselves awake. I found this very efficacious. One day when in reserve I asked my servant what had happened to my snuff, since he had looked after my things in the line. He told me he would go and see. A few minutes later he returned.

"Oi gave it to Buggy,<sup>1</sup> sorr, and he thought it was pepper, sorr, and he put it in the soup, sorr."

So that was that; but no one had noticed that the soup was anything out of the ordinary.

While we were in support in the sunken road at Boiry,

<sup>1</sup> The officers' cook.

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A.W.L.P. and I happened to be alone in our deep dug-out having some soup and a mug of whisky. Suddenly the blanket at the top of the flight of steps was moved aside and a tall, strangely dressed man walked slowly down and sat on the bottom step but one. He was dressed in a long khaki coat and a brown leather peaked cap. I thought at first he was a chauffeur. At last I had it. An American officer. A.W.L.P. paid no attention. He never did. "Have a drink?" I asked cheerfully. There was no answer. "We've got some soup here, if you'd like it?" Still no answer. There was a pause, and then I tried again. "Have a smoke?" The square shoulders hunched slightly and a deep voice answered querulously: "Can't ye see I'm chewin'?"

I looked at him closely. He certainly was doing something queer with his jaws, and I was just about to say "Bad luck," or whatever one does say to people in that predicament, when there was a noise like a siphon and a piece of chewing gum flew between A.W.L.P.'s face and mine, and the tall figure stood up, stretched himself and walked slowly out.

"The Americans have come," I said to A.W.L.P. in a hushed voice.

"Have they?" he replied, and went on with his soup.

But that was not the end. Worse was to follow.

Shortly after this incident Battalion Headquarters informed me that a battalion of Americans was to take over from us that night, and I was to stay with the relieving company with three of our own sergeants and show them the ropes. I shall never forget the night they came up. It is a wonder there is anyone left to tell the tale. I stood

in the dark some little distance from our parados in a bit of dead ground, waiting for our guides to bring them up. Suddenly I heard a chattering and a laughing the like of which in the silent night was the monkey-house at the Zoo. I was petrified. The Germans were only a hundred yards away, and if they heard this noise I knew all the guns and heavy stuff in the sector would be down on us. I ran towards them. "Stop that bloody row!" I shouted. But not a bit. They were telling each other what they would do to the Kaiser and anyone else if they saw them. I cursed the officer, I cursed the men. He cursed me back, and I was at my wits' end wondering what to do—and we were now only twenty yards from our front line where our fellows were waiting to be relieved.

"Do you know," I yelled, "the Germans are only fifty yards from here, and if you don't keep quiet they'll shell the lot of you to hell?" Then an extraordinary thing happened. The whole company dropped on all fours and began to crawl towards our line. By this time I did not know whether to laugh or cry. But they would not stand up. The officer in front, who led the way, mumbled to me that they had been told in America when they got within fifty yards of the enemy always to lie down or crawl, and they were doing it. They certainly were, and there was no more to be said. The relief took hours. No one would stand up, although the trench was seven foot high at least. After the relief no one would sleep. They had been told no one slept in the front line. The officers had no control over the men but, goodness me, they were quiet—till the morning.

By dawn I was tired to death. I had patrolled the whole of our front to get in touch with the company on our

left and right, slipping over duck-boards and frightening the sentries nearly as much as they frightened me, and I was away down on the extreme right when suddenly Bedlam was let loose. Rifles went off, bombs exploded, Lewis guns rattled. "Good God!" I thought, "the Germans have attacked and there is nothing but this crowd between them and the Channel ports"—which was true at that time, except for a few cavalry at St. Pol, I believe. I ran back up the trench, only to be met by two sharp cracks as bullets passed close by my head. Round a traverse I came upon an Irish American, firing over the parados at our support line and dancing about on the fire-step like one possessed.

"Look, look, there's a man!" he shouted, struggling to draw his bayonet with one hand while the other waved his rifle.

I jumped on the fire-step, and behind the long grass that was waving gently in the morning air I saw a wooden post that supported our rear wire entanglement looming faintly through the mist. I explained, and asked him what he had done. He had fired his "automatic" (by which he meant the Lewis gun). It had stuck. He had not mended it, as the only "guy" who knew about it was at the other end of the trench. He had then thrown four bombs, two of which had failed to explode. He "guessed" he had forgotten to take the pins out.

A few seconds later came the call to stand-to, and from that moment onwards nothing could stop those men from firing at anything, and the result was what I expected. An unheard-of thing for our quiet sector happened in an hour or two. The Germans started to shell the trench. Every time they made a hit the remaining occupants bolted down

the trench. With my revolver I stopped their rush and drove them back; but they told me they had no idea they should stay while the shelling was on. By this time I was frightened to death, and, as always happens to me when I am in that state, I lost my temper. The American officers told me they had joined up at the same time as the rest of the men, and therefore they knew little more than their subordinates, and discipline was consequently difficult.

After the "strafe" had subsided I told my own sergeants to fill the men with tales of what happened to people who fired without orders. The Irishmen rose to the occasion—torture in the Tower of London, summary arrest and execution, marvellous tales were invented, as only Irishmen can invent them, and the result was peace. We then had a rifle inspection. I tried to make the officer in command tell the men off for the state of their rifles, but the most they got was: "Say, yer gun's like a chunk of rust," and then he would pass on.

The American transport organization had broken down and there was no food for the officers, so I gave them my breakfast and sent down for some more. About midday a fine-looking man (I discovered he was a regular 1st sergeant), covered in stripes and exceedingly smart and efficient, arrived with a ground sheet full of bread and jam. In the middle of the company he dumped the whole issue and called out: "Say, boys, scramble," and they did. The big ones got most and the little ones none. That was their affair. I went to sleep. I was three days and three nights with them, and finally returned to the battalion worn and weary, praying God we should not be attacked. J.C.H. went up with them for the next three days—a different company but just as difficult—and then our new allies



went off south to continue committing suicide at Château-Thierry.

Soon after this I was transferred to the 1st Guards Brigade Trench Mortar Battery, and went up the line while my own battalion was in reserve. I was there during the attempted German attack on August 21st, and went over with them in support of the battalion at the battle of St. Leger. I had the seat of my trousers taken completely off by a shell that landed near me as I lay on the ground that day. It was an unfortunate day for one of the other battalions, who were nearly wiped out by misreading a dispatch giving them "zero" hour. As far as I remember, the battalion in question received a message reading: "Say four brace and a half. How many lives has a cat got?" The battalion went over without a barrage or support at 04.30 hours instead of 09.00 hours and was badly knocked about.

We moved up with the advance, and I returned to No. 1 Company in time for a ghastly period of trench duty outside Mœuvres, where one night, having taken out half the company to dig holes in front of our line in order to enfilade the village, I lost my bearings on my way back to report and walked into the village before I knew where I was. Our company were holding a trench line of at least three hundred yards, and so scattered were we that a German patrol walked into our trench in broad daylight and went back with ten prisoners, while our support line, watching the performance, thought the Germans were our prisoners and did nothing. This depleted our strength, and when I tried to close up the line I found a gap of fifty yards terminating in Sergeant Bray alone with a barricade formed of German dead, holding his front and both flanks.

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When we came out of this ghastly place we took about four hours to cover three miles. There was a terrific thunderstorm, and in the vivid flashes of lightning it was discovered that the battalion were wearily following round in a complete circle. There was no shelter the whole of that night. I went back to the battery after this and went over with the first wave of the battalion in the battle of the Canal du Nord, where we lost heavily. The description of this battle in the official history of the regiment is written from my account, but one thing is left out, and that is that we were late in coming up and in our wrong positions at "zero." This caused an unnecessary loss of life. There was the largest concentration of artillery and machine-gun fire that had ever been known, and so loud was the noise that hearing was impossible unless one shouted in a man's ear with cupped hands. An old soldier described the barrage afterwards as "so terrible that even the worms got up and cried for mercy."

It was a ghastly muddle, and I could write pages about it. There was one amusing instance that happened to J.B.B. (later killed in Ireland) who was commanding a platoon. He and Sergeant Devins were ahead of the platoon well on the other side of the canal, and out of the worst inferno, when an extra heavy shell landed in the middle of one of their scattered sections. J.B.B. called out to ask if any were hurt. There was no answer. He called again. Still no reply. This was too much for the sergeant. He rose from the ground and bellowed: "Speak up when the officers talks to you, b'Jaisus!" But still there was no answer. Devins ran back, and almost immediately returned, saluted and said: "All them poor devils is dead, sorr, so there'll be no one speaking up, sorr." It is a sad

story on writing it, but we thought it funny at the time. Farther on, I remember coming upon a line of dead Devons, and as I turned them over one by one I noticed they had no hair on their chins. There were some thirty of them lying as they fell. They were the eighteen-year-olds who had been sent out during the panic of the March retreat.

The advance continued, and I stayed with the battery, commanding them again in the fighting of October 8th and 9th: when my nerves were in none too good a state. On the 9th I was convinced I was going to be hit—not killed, I knew that. Even on September 27th I knew implicitly that nothing could touch me, just as well as B.C. knew he was to be killed—which he was on his twenty-first birthday. We were advancing up a hill in pigtail formation and I was very frightened. I was not very fond of shells by then. When we came to a road on the skyline the shelling was worse. We crouched at the sides. A shell landed near by, there was a “ping” close to me and I had been hit—just the first layer of skin off the knuckle of the little finger on my left hand. I licked it and it was well, and, strange to relate, I knew what I had dreaded was over and I carried on happily for the rest of the day. During that advance—we had left trenches then—an incident happened that shows the discipline of the Brigade of Guards in its better though humorous aspect.

As we went slowly up the hill a corporal came up to me, saluted, and asked leave for a man to fall out. I understood what he meant and automatically told him to stay with the man, which is what is always done on route marches. Just breasting the hill I looked back and there,

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down the slope, squatted the unhappy sufferer while the corporal stood over him, dodging the shells as best he could. That a man *in extremitate naturæ* should be so disciplined as to ask the corporal to ask for leave under heavy shell-fire is, I should imagine, unique. He deserved a Military Medal.

On October 16th I returned to the battalion, where I found rumours of another attack. I did not mind this time. Everyone told me that I was bound to be left out, as I was the only officer who had had an uninterrupted spell of front line and battle since July. The night I arrived the company commanders were sent for, and the rest of us amused ourselves in divers ways. The company commander of No. 4 had just gone on leave and a senior subaltern was commanding in his stead. Suddenly a runner came from the commanding officer and I was summoned to headquarters. I was to command No. 4 for the battle. My heart sank, but there was nothing to be said. A.W.L.P. had urged that I had had enough for the time being, but it was no use.

For three days we rehearsed this battle. Depression settled on all of us. We grumbled and groused. Our particular job looked impossible. We moved up to St. Hilaire. We spent a day up the line to mark our assembly areas. We moved up to the battle on the night of October 19th, after having been shelled with gas most of the evening. We attacked at two-twenty a.m.—and this saved us. Had we attacked at dawn I doubt if we should have got over the River Selle, but as it was, the Germans were withdrawing their guns, and by the time they had stopped, turned, and found the range of the river, we were over. Before this battle we had been buoyed up by a story

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of atrocity committed in Solesmes by the Germans on a Frenchwoman—which was probably untrue, but good propaganda. We found our positions. It rained the whole day. It froze at night. We only had holes that we dug ourselves as shelter, and my sergeant-major went off his head in the middle. We were shelled by whizzbangs unmercifully for three or four hours ceaselessly. The left flank, as on September 27th, had not come up, and one of my officers, A.E.H., cleared the machine-gun posts to enable it to do so. My company had started in reserve but took over two nights later. While I was doing the taking over I decided to withdraw and dig in higher up the hill, as I feared shelling on the low ground. That night I made the company dig and re-dig their shelters three times before I was satisfied as to their position. It was an unpleasant job in the dark and rain; the men were grumbling and I was frightened and, consequently, in a foul temper. However, in the morning they blessed me, for every shelter on the low ground was blown to smithereens, and they were safe. The adjutant was hit, but our casualties were few in comparison to the shelling. We were finally relieved by what had once been a whole company. There were no more than forty or fifty, and most of them, including the officer, were drunk. I was so cold—the water that had crept into my field boots seemed to be frozen—and I was so tired that I did a very idle “hand over” and walked my company away, treading on the sides of my boots. I remember the second day of that battle coming upon pools of mustard gas lying in the *pavé* of the road and wondering if I would dare just kneel in it and so get evacuated; but I had not the courage. We went to billets in Carnières after that show, being taken

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by lorries. I do not remember the journey. We arrived somewhere, my quartermaster-sergeant took off my pack; I aimlessly waited about till the men had "got down to it," and then I went to my billet and slept—and slept.

## CHAPTER SIX

CARNIÈRES was a paradise—the rest, the reaction from the front can never be forgotten. We enjoyed ourselves to the full. Some days after we arrived company commanders were told to send in four names for decorations. I sent in one D.C.M. (a stretcher-bearer), the sergeant who had commanded the front platoon during our digging contretemps for an M.M., a man I forget but had behaved well, and finally, because I could think of no one especially worthy, my runner, who had been with me till he was hit. The D.C.M. came through and, I believe, the bar to the M.M. for the sergeant, my third man got nothing, but my runner did. I created rather a disturbance by recommending a man who had been sentenced to death, but reprieved, as a lance-corporal. The second in command, who was then commanding officer (he had commanded us during the last show), explained this. I replied I knew it but I wanted him as a lance-corporal. The commanding officer trusted me, I trusted the man, and the result was an excellent lance-corporal out of a brave man with a tendency to cause trouble among young soldiers.

In November I went on leave, and was amongst the crowd that wept outside Buckingham Palace on the 11th. I returned to the battalion soon after and, picking them up at Charleroi, marched all the way with them to Cologne. At Cologne I was looked upon as a

Bolshevik, owing to some strongly expressed opinions about the running of a battalion, and was given a delightful job as officer commanding a steamer on the Rhine taking returned prisoners to Rotterdam. On the eastern bank there was constant skirmishing between the German Government troops and the Spartacists, which was visible from our deck. On passing Amerongen, where the Kaiser was, our Irish flag at the mast-head was saluted by the sentries, and as I was the first officer of the Allied Armies to pass the Kaiser after his flight, I gave him a special salute for himself, if he should be looking out of a window.

I was still leading this peaceful life when the whole division was ordered home, as the War Office expected a revolution in England and could not rely on any but us. As there had been small mutinies at Cologne in most of the Guards regiments but ours—and that was not my fault—it might not have worked so well if we had been put to the test. The trouble was demobilization and general fed-upness. Arrived in England, we went to Warley and were put on the square for drill. W.C.M. and I, by this time, were ready for mutiny at this unnecessary torture. I was demobilized in June, and that was the end of Army life for me—at any rate, in the British Army.

Looking back on it, much was enjoyable. The friends one met are tied to one with bonds that are different, somehow, to any others. We of the war saw each other laugh and saw each other cry. We understood the weakness and the strength of mankind. We understood the nervous system. We were tolerant and forgiving, and I think we still are—or try to be. There is a strange gap between us and those that come after, and as to the difference between us and the former generation—well, it is difficult to define.



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I think they have lost our respect and faith, and that is their loss—not ours.

I went to stay in Scotland with W.C.M. just before I was demobilized. He was keen to fish in one of those desolate pools of water that lie in Wigtownshire. I did not think much of fishing; I think less after my experience there. We got into a boat and for two solid hours W.C.M. held a piece of string in the water, while I smoked a pipe and watched. At length I asked him quite politely what he thought he was doing. He lost his temper and I lost mine. I walked home alone, and asked him what he had caught when he returned about six o'clock. He did not see the joke when I laughed at his answer, which was—nothing. He went on fishing. I went for walks. We argued and grumbled when we met, but we liked being together. We were both war-worn. He much more than I.

I returned to Worcestershire after demobilization and threw myself into the Comrades of the Great War movement, feeling vaguely that if we ex-soldiers were organized we might shift something, but the Generals and Colonels were too strong. They soon secured control, and out of this came the British Legion with its medley of Admirals and Generals and no politics—except those of Admirals and Generals, which are, of course, very orthodox.

I was living alone in Worcestershire then, and I found great interest in talking to the gipsies who always camped round about Hartlebury Common. I learnt much of their ways, but was surprised to find the Romany tongue to be entirely absent. One day I gave a lift to a gipsy who was running into the town to fetch a midwife. We found the nurse after some searching, and hurried her back in time.

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The grateful father produced a gold sovereign for this service, but I preferred that the son be called after me. Last time I saw my namesake he had bare legs, a shirt, and knickers tied up with a piece of string. He is a good fellow and very friendly. He should be twelve by now.

My nerves were none too good and I could not bear the crowds I had been used to. I therefore drifted about in various public-houses, hanging on, as it were, to the old Army spirit of free intercourse and saying what you thought. I took no interest in politics. I was feeling my way. I had a complete contempt for artificiality and patronage, and was amused by the amazement of men I met who, taking what they had been told for an invitation, arrived at the houses of certain aristocratic V.A.D.'s and owners of private war hospitals, and were sent to the servants' hall or told the lady was not in and "would they go round to the back." It was a great mistake, my lords and ladies, to tell the men they were "gentlemen" when they were in hospital. It caused a lot of reflection when they found the joke out in those few years after the war.

I got tired of Worcestershire and went up to London, where by devious methods I came in touch with the famous Captain C., the head of the Secret Service. He gave me a job and I set off for Paris. After a week there I moved down to Boulogne, where I opened a passport office and held the acting rank of Vice-Consul. I had a lot to do with the French Police, and we got on very well together, but with the British Military still at Boulogne things were not so easy. They had a habit of letting civilians on to the Channel boats without letting me know anything. As this was my department I soon came up against the staff.

One be-medalled and be-spurred staff officer who had never seen a shell fired in his life, and who was the chief offender, told me he knew Lord Curzon, Mr. Balfour, etc., when I remonstrated with him. I asked him if he knew anything about the war. He was annoyed, and so was I. I stayed a month at Boulogne dishing out *visas* and doing other things. One day a Frenchwoman arrived who wanted a *visa* for herself, daughter and maid. There were special instructions about maids at that time, and I had reason to believe she was going to obtain employment in England, so I refused the maid a *visa*. Whereupon the woman became excited and said she was a countess. I said that as a Socialist I did not mind what she was; besides, such titles did not legally count in France. She wept and raved. She said she had letters from Generals and Admirals. I told her that meant nothing to me. She went away. A week later I was sent a complete report of our conversation from Paris, asking me for comments. I replied that the report was amazingly accurate. However, I was immediately recalled and sacked without a word of explanation, being told incidentally that she had complained to Lord Birkenhead, whom she knew. When one realizes how impossible it is to get rid of a Chairman of a Court of Referees who treats the unemployed like dirt, and how easy it was for me to be sacked, one realizes there must be ways and means. However, I had done according to my instructions, though perhaps not with the patience or tact necessary for countesses, and I did not mind very much. I went to London and took part in a charity *matinée* at the Apollo, which I enjoyed.

Like Rimbaud, I again returned home and spent Christmas there. My friend of regimental days, G.L.B.,

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who had commanded No. 3 Company during most of my time, stayed with us, and we decided to go off to Algeria in order to get away from people and things. We accordingly sailed in January, and the moment I got to the south of France I realized that this was the area of my dreams. This was where my stock had come from, and I was supremely content.

Once in Algeria, I was further captivated; and now that I know that country well I realize that if ever I thought of anything so sentimental as leaving my bones in a country, I would like to leave them there. The warmth and quiet, the cloudless sky and the scent of orange-blossom, mimosa and eucalyptus; the variety of scenery—the sea, the great arable plain, the mountains, the desert—all these spell freedom and peace to me whom fortune had tied to an industrial town in the Midlands and the fog and damp of London.

We stayed at the St. George, which was full of people at that time, taking many walks together and talking of the old Army days. We neither of us worried about the future. Little did we realize how I was to see more fighting before the year was out, revolutions, massacres and prisons, and he to return to England and eventually marry my cousin, Elsie Kipling. We stayed a month in Algiers and then we parted, he going west into Morocco, I south into the desert where I decided to live as an Arab, learn their language, and find out something of their philosophy.

I was interested in the French colonization, and when I was to tour South and East Africa I realized the immense superiority of the former. In Algeria there is no class or colour bar. Europeans and Arabs work together on the roads, in house building, on farms, in the Army, in the

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prisons. The public conveyances have no "Europeans only" written on them, and justice is administered equally. Beating of natives is unheard of, and the result is a contented population. Arabs have motor-cars and are received everywhere—in restaurants, private houses and hotels. There are many Spaniards on the coast, mostly connected with grape-growing and other fruit, and several Italians plying their trade in the docks or as barbers and shop-keepers.

Algeria is the only country I know where you can lead five entirely separate types of existence within a day's motor journey of each other. You have maritime life, town life, country life, mountain life and desert life. You can even motor in an hour or two from an exceedingly hot tropical plain up to a snow-covered skijoring ground in the mountains.

At the end of February I set off for Bou-Saada with two friends, a man and a woman, and we motored all the way. The glories of the plain with its myriads of tangerine groves, the ever-increasing wonder of the Atlas scenery as we rose higher and higher and seeming to be interminable, the high plateau that runs to the Little Sahara—I have done the journey so often now, but it still holds its fascination. The first glimpse of sand as the road winds round and round and down and down, suddenly a little oasis, more turnings and a long level road that runs unhedged and straight in the midst of what appears to be boundless space, interposed by isolated hills cut into fantastic shapes like the hills of South Africa by the action of water when the Sahara was sea. At last, round the comfortable base of one of these hills nestling away to the left under another hill of purest pink, the little oasis of Bou-Saada, father of gladness—a

rose-shaped blob of pink-hued yellow within a belt of darkest green.

We stayed at the little hotel—now re-built and belonging to the octopus of North Africa, the *Compagnie Générale Transatlantique*—for two or three days, and then my friends left.

After their departure I made the acquaintance of a young French painter—Roger Duval—who had just rented an Arab house and intended to stay for three months. We joined forces. The rent was five francs a month, and the house of one storey surrounded a large courtyard in which was a tank and running water. Six rooms opened out of the courtyard and, having hired a table and chair and bought a jug and coffee-making utensils, we entered into possession. We swept our rooms daily and cleared the place, after much labour, of fleas, bed-bugs and scorpions, and here I was to stay happily and peacefully till June. I grew a beard at this juncture, and celebrated my twenty-first birthday by a bottle of champagne at the Oasis Hotel where we fed, having two meals a day, for three hundred francs a month, which at the then rate of exchange was about five pounds a month.

Roger painted a great deal, chiefly studies of Arab men, women and children, and I worked at Arabic and odds and ends of writing, some of which has since seen the light of day, and some was for my own contemplation and practice. I made several expeditions alone with an Arab boy, on donkeys, that I much enjoyed. To wander along on a donkey mile after mile with nothing to halt your line of vision but the sky-line, to watch the colours changing from pink to purple, to green (where a patch of grass would appear) or to yellow; to see mirages ahead and be constantly

in the heat of the sun; to hear no sound, simply to think—that was a life I loved at the time, and one I could live again as a monk or recluse with the greatest of ease.

Roger and I climbed several of the hills and explored the lovely little river for many miles upstream between the rocky canyons and the multi-coloured oleanders. I have seen the pink hill that guards Bou-Saada change its colour by the advent of millions of locusts, and I have seen the tiny, scarce-moving stream swell in an hour to a raging torrent five feet deep.

The sunset at Bou-Saada is almost world-famous now, and we used to watch it night after night from the flat roof of our house. The colours were unbelievable, and that sunset, to me, has only been surpassed by the reflection on Victoria Nyanza, when the water is a sheet of beaten gold, of an East African sunset. And yet—as I write, a memory of Ala Geuze's snow-clad heights bathed by a sinking sun comes to my mind—and though recovering from snow-blindness as I was at the time, that sunset in Armenia is another glorious picture of beauty. My mother always says sunsets make her happy, but they only give me the happiness of *morbidezza*; the dominant feeling of infinite sadness.

Living at Bou-Saada in my day (he died early in 1930) was the famous French painter, Etienne Dinet, then an old man. As a young man he had come to Bou-Saada when foreigners were not encouraged, and being set upon in a narrow street was rescued by a Mzabite named Sliman. Sliman and Dinet lived together from that day till the latter died, and they wrote several books together. Dinet became a Mohammedan and went to Mecca after he had married one of Sliman's sisters. Although a fluent Arabic speaker and living nearly all his time in Bou-Saada, Dinet

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never wore Arab clothes. He gave me a photograph of one of his paintings of three Arabs praying at sunset. I knew the three men, who acted as models for his pictures, and the likenesses are amazingly good.

All this time I was learning Arabic reading, writing and speaking with an Arab tailor named Shellali ben-Abd-el-Kader, and under his tuition I learned much of the conquest of Algeria and the Mohammedan liturgy; being able before I left to recite my three Suras and tell my beads. When I left, Shellali gave me the last letter written to the Sheikh of Bou-Saada by Abd-el-Kader, the leader of the Arabs, when the French under Bugeaud were pressing him hard. At the foot of the paper is Abd-el-Kader's seal.

I kept the Fast of Ramadhan for a week—which was enough for me—and was interested to see the psychological effect of such a radical change in their mode of feeding upon their nervous system. During Ramadhan nervous headaches, irritability and extreme sensitiveness seem to take control of nearly all Arabs.

After the feast was over a fantasia was held. To this "tourney" Arabs from neighbouring villages pour into Bou-Saada, and horse races and charges with a rifle-firing accompaniment are the order of the day. There seem to be no rules of the turf; if a horse is being bumped at a corner the aggressed rider will beat his "bumper," either beast or man, till the pair move away. The evening is spent in dances round a huge fire of palm fronds. The dancers, who are all men, dance to the music of the Arab oboe and the "taboul" or single-sided tambourine-drum, and every now and again the watching womenfolk will raise their weird cry (high G), which vibrates as the hand is tapped rapidly on the mouth.



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There are dances of opposing groups of men, and solo dances; which latter consist of a man dancing till, in his frenzy, he leaps towards the fire, when watchers catch him and hurl him back. He ceases only when he is too tired to continue. Occasionally some negro, covered in bells, pieces of looking-glass and a panther-skin, will dance. This is a stupefying performance, for he turns round and round, faster and faster, wagging his tongue, and rolling his eyes, the whole time shouting and beating on a "taboul" or on clashing cymbals.

At the beginning of June, when the heat was tremendous, Roger Duval left, and I followed at the end of the month. I stayed a day or two in Algiers, and then took a bus to that little paradise of an old Roman seaside resort—Tipaza, where I had been for a day's trip once or twice before.

Tipaza is one of the most interesting, beautiful and unique spots in the world. Originally a Roman seaport and residential town, it is now in ruins, though it is possible to reconstruct in your mind the beauties of the days gone by. On the east side of the port is the burial-ground, still marked by massive sarcophagi, and the remains of small houses. Then comes the little port, and to the west rises a rounded hill, on the very summit of which is the floor of the Forum, as new-looking and perfect as if it had been but lately built. The gutters round the sides of the floor for the rain appear newly chiselled. Below, the courts of justice are marked by the bases of pillars. Down the other side of the hill to a little bay is a cluster of ruined villas, mosaics from whose floors are frequently being unearthed and removed to museums. So clear is the little creek that under its water can still be seen the mosaic floors of other

villas, over whose foundations the sea has long since crept. The ground rises again on the other side where the ruins of the Roman baths are clearly visible, even to the smoke-charred chimney that heated the hot bath. Behind all this are the remains of the main street, flanked by ruined houses, a little theatre, municipal buildings and shops. Away to the west, outside the city wall, the ground drops to the wide sandy bay of Chenoua, which glitters in the morning sun till the huge bulk of Chenoua mountain shuts it out as the daylight sinks in the west. On this beach there are no stones, no rocks, and the bathing is superb.

I was lucky enough at Tipaza to meet Eugene Deshayes, the great French maritime artist, and many were the trips we took in his little boat to explore the caves and rocks at the base of Chenoua mountain. Several days I spent among the ruins, clad only in a bathing dress, searching for relics of the past. I found coins, bits of mosaic and pieces of tear-glass, but Deshayes, who had known the place nearly all his life, had in many years made a delightful collection of Roman household lamps, carved strangely and not always decently. The French authorities, who are constantly excavating, have lately unearthed the huge town gateway, at least half of which was under sand and gravel.

Other afternoons I spent with the Arab schoolmaster, who would sit under a tree with his little scholars, and we would all read the Koran together.

At the end of July I decided to move. I had a desire to go to Russia and I had not the faintest idea how to set about it. I returned to Algiers and went the round of the shipping offices. At length I discovered a Dutch cargo boat, bound for Malta, Athens and Egypt, and on August 3rd, 1920, I embarked; the only other passenger being a

Mr. Wadsworth of the Advance Rumely Threshing Machine Co. of the U.S.A.

The first two days were unpleasant, but at Malta the sea was like a mill-pond. We stayed three days there and then steamed north-east. Valetta harbour is full of blue clay, and from the anchor chain I gathered enough to make several heads of the captain and crew. This occupied my time till we got to Athens, or rather Piræus. Here we stayed four days. Athens was in a turmoil. The streets were full of soldiers, and burnings of newspaper offices and riots were everyday happenings. The Acropolis filled me with ecstasy. I had never imagined anything so beautiful, and when I saw the false Caryatid I wondered whether Great Britain would ever do the right thing and restore the original to Greece. I bathed at Phaleron, and met at the Hôtel Grand Bretagne one who had been at Bushey with me. It was extremely hot in Athens, the white streets and buildings acting as reflectors for the light and rejectors for the heat. We left our American friend at Athens, as he was on his way to Smyrna where he hoped to do trade.

The sea was blue and calm when we left Piræus for Alexandria, and my mind was full of Greece and her history as she faded away in the distance and hid herself gently in a faint azure mist. Alexandria was also unsettled at this time, and there had been riots all over the town. I stayed in an hotel wherein was M. Khatissian, President of the Armenian Republic, who was touring the Armenian colonies in the Levant, raising money for the prosecution of the war with Turkey which Great Britain was urging them to continue. I met M. Khatissian, and almost before I realized it I had arranged with him to proceed to Armenia and train his troops for continuing the fight. Little did

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I imagine what the outcome would be. He returned to Armenia almost immediately, and I followed later in the Italian boat *Abazzia*, calling at Jaffa, Haifa, Beyrouth, Limassol, Larnaca, Alexandretta, Adalia, Adana, Smyrna, the Dardanelles, and landing finally at Constantinople.

The adventures that followed my departure for Georgia, my journey to Tiflis and to Erivan, the war, the arrival of the Bolsheviks, the revolution, my first imprisonment, my release, the counter-revolution, the massacre, the return of the Bolsheviks, my escape across the snow-covered mountains to Turkey, my arrest, my imprisonment for five months and my ever-expected death, my release and my return to England have all been written in my book "Six Prisons and Two Revolutions" (Hodder and Stoughton), and there is only need for a short résumé here. It was a very long nightmare, but it taught me four things—the stupidity of ambition, the feeling of starvation, infinite patience and the comfort that things spiritual can give to a tired body and soul. Inasmuch was it worth the trial.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

AN Italian boat took me from Constantinople to Batum. A boat that seemed to wave civilization away from her as she breasted the waves of that unhappy sea. At Ordu, Ineboli, Samsun and Kerrasonde we stopped to unload and take on cargo, and I felt the while that I was destined for strange happenings and unthought-of danger. I put it behind me, however, and resorting to the fatalist's doctrine paid no further attention to what, afterwards, appeared to me to have been psychic warnings.

Batum, a prettily situated township, lay as usual under a downpour of rain, and a most forbidding looking sight it was. On the quay, a few poorly clad porters; and a grey mist enshrouded the town. I carried my own luggage—for no one attempted to offer help—and I made my way sadly and slowly to a cab. With the few words of Russian at my command I asked the driver to take me to the station. There I found that no one was allowed to leave Batum without having been inoculated. In despair I sought out the British Vice-Consul, and finally with his help, given most ungraciously, I was inoculated by a doctor and granted the necessary permit to travel, although I had not been in the town the requisite amount of days. I bought some food and set off again for the station, where pandemonium reigned. It seemed as if a thousand people

wanted places in a train capable of accommodating but half the number. They struggled and I struggled, and eventually I reached a dirty compartment that was already full. I sat on my valise in the corridor and despair descended on me. Alone in a strange land—I do not know when I have ever felt so unutterably alone. Then a face appeared from one of the compartments. Would I care to come in: they would make room. It was spoken in French, and I was most grateful to him. For eighteen hours we journeyed haltingly through unrivalled scenery. Glorious leaves on trees I had never seen before: little cascades that thundered with the pride of strength: arid lands that lay cracked and parched with the late summer's heat, and ruined castles that told of ancient and unhappy far-off days. Deserted of people, lonely and uncared-for was this sad country of Georgia that had seen so much and had lain like a wounded lion beneath the feet of centuries. But withal it was indescribably different, and as I watched I wondered at the very little one had heard of it.

Tiflis in the rain was a dreary sight, and most of the known hotels were full. At length, after an hour in an aged cab, I landed at a cheap and somewhat squalid hotel in the Elizav'yetskya Oolitz. The following day I went to M. Khatissian's address, only to find he had left for Armenia the previous day. I went to the station and found that a train was leaving for Erivan at six o'clock the next morning. I was up early and, carrying my scanty luggage, made my way through the damp streets to the station. It was cold and raining, and in the queue that was forming outside the booking-office I felt faint for the first time in my life, and went outside into the grey dawn to recover. The station was crowded with poorly clad

refugees bent on wandering hither and thither from town to town looking for lost friends and relations. At this station a strange feeling of danger settled on my spirit, and an inward warning urged me to go back. I had not come as far as this to be thwarted of my object and, heedless of this strange oppression, I joined the mad scramble for the train. Tripping over railway lines and slipping into puddles, I finally managed to land myself and my valise into a corner of a third-class carriage that was rapidly filled to suffocation by a motley assembly of poverty-stricken Armenian peasants. Here I was to pass two days and two nights, stopping and feeding at many tiny stations isolated in most glorious country. Once in Armenia, the countryside changed from hills, trees and streams to plain land and vast stretches of derelict country.

At Alexandropol the station was overflowing with refugees, who were continually arriving, having fled westwards from the victorious Turks. Everywhere was desolation and misery, terror and starvation. On then from Alexandropol, under the shadow of the glorious mountain Ala Geuze, towards the capital.

Early on the third morning we arrived at Erivan, and I was lucky enough to receive hospitality from the three members of a British Military Mission that was still in the town. There I learnt that the Armenians had fallen back on to the fortress of Kars, and that they were suffering from lack of ammunition and clothing. The British Government had supplied them recently, however, with disused Ross rifles that were useless for the Mauser cartridges generally used, many khaki overcoats, and several hundred pairs of Army boots that were several sizes too small for the Armenian peasant.

Erivan was a town of hunger. Orphans filled the streets, were collected by the police and handed over to the Near East Relief branch, or placed in large buildings and fed with black bread, being all the food the hard-pressed Government could provide. Peasants from the surrounding country of military age were conscripted and drilled, and this became my especial job. The capital was striving hard to put itself in a state of defence should the Turks advance from the south-east and break our defence. It was a hopeless job. Hardly any ammunition, very little food, no uniforms, useless boots—only a fast dwindling patriotism that was shortly to give way to despair. At military headquarters there was a belief that Kars would hold out, but they knew little of the havoc Bolshevik propaganda was playing amongst the troops. There had already been one mutiny in Erivan before I came, and another shortly after my arrival. The first was quelled by the prompt action of our best garrison troops—the artillery; and the second by the Town Commandant, who alone strode up to the ringleader and hit him in the face. Just as small things can start a mutiny, so can little things stop one.

In the middle of our drilling and defence work Kars fell owing to incompetent staff work, Bolshevik propaganda and general panic, and Erivan was terror-stricken. All available troops were rushed up to Alexandropol, and we awaited the advancing enemy. This was in November.

M. Khatissian left for the front to try and arrange an armistice, and rumours of an organized Bolshevik rising frightened the Parliament that was still sitting in Erivan.

The British Military Mission, seeing the defeat of Armenia, decided to withdraw before further trouble, and



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Captain H. D. Court, the head of it, urged me to come along with him. I had been living after the first four days at the local hotel, so his departure would not affect domestic arrangements. My interest as to the next move unfortunately made me obstinate, so I refused his offer and watched his car disappear northwards. His departure left five Americans and two Italians as the only other representatives of Western races—the former being in charge of the Near East Relief station, and the latter commercial representatives. We were shortly to be fewer in number, but the future at that moment was hidden, for, had I known the consequences of my decision, I should certainly never have made it.

The departure of Court broke my last link with the country of my birth, and I felt even more alone than usual.

Events moved rapidly. M. Khatissian signed a devastating armistice that was to bring the Turks to Alexandropol and completely disarm the country. He had no alternative but that of a further massacre. In the meanwhile at Erivan the Bolshevik representatives had made a bargain with the Parliament. The Bolsheviks from Azerbaijan should be allowed to enter the country and reorganize it. They would then drive the Turks back and, should Armenia prefer not to become Communist, then the Russians would return home.

Because of the great fear of the Turks, the Parliament accepted this offer, but it was the lesser of two evils, and they did not trust the Turks, even with a signed armistice. The result was that on December 2nd, by poster and newspaper, Erivan was informed that the Government no longer existed, and that a dictatorship was established under the control of the National Military leader, Dro. This was

not disturbing to the ordinary folk, for was not Dro a great national hero? To others it was a thunderclap when it was learnt that Russian troops were already over the frontier. Anyway, as far as I was concerned, I was at last to see Bolshevism at work.

It was apparent the Bolsheviks were not going to take "no" for an answer, and it was not long before the first Red cavalry entered the town, fingers on the triggers of their carbines, ready for the slightest show of opposition. The people, not understanding, were merely interested; officers and soldiers, including myself, had removed every badge of rank and every decoration. The cavalry certainly looked superb, and they sang in harmony as their horses moved through the snow. It was difficult to realize that this same regiment had quelled counter-revolution after counter-revolution in Baku and other parts of Azerbaijan with indescribable cruelty. So death and music went together, and red flags appeared as if by magic from house windows where but a few hours earlier the national flag had waved. Soldiers wore red rosettes, and the garrison cavalry troops changed their standard as if there was no difference in the meaning. In a few hours bands were playing, Red infantry was arriving, and speeches were delivered. Photographs of Lenin and Marx appeared on the Parliament building, and red ribbon hung in festoons. Soldiers shook me by the hand or kissed me on both cheeks and called me "tovaresh." Everyone was now "comrade." I liked this friendliness. This was something that appealed to me, but unfortunately it did not last long in my particular case.

Amongst the many Russian experts and commissars came the celebrated head of the Tchezvychaika—Artabekov,

the terror of the Caucasus. Two days after his arrival I found myself ensconced in a temporary prison with a military doctor and a professor of statistics. No explanation was given, and apart from the fact that I had told a Bolshevik commissar that commandeering tinned milk in Erivan for re-exportation to Russia when Armenian children were starving was hardly a fraternal thing to do, I could think of no reason for my imprisonment.

My entry into this, my first prison, reminded me of scenes of French revolutionary prisons I had seen on the stage. My two companions in misfortune were playing draughts as I entered, whereupon they both rose and bowed. I saluted, and we fell to talking of the strange events that had taken place during the last few days. Most of the members of the late Government had fled before the Bolshevik arrival, and we were soon to learn that they had been betrayed on the Georgian frontier and were in Bolshevik hands at Dilidjan. The Town Commandant had also fled, and we were destined to meet again in Constantinople and Paris, where he eventually returned to his pre-war profession and became a well-known actor for French films, his best known part being that of the traitor colonel in "Michel Strogoff," where he fought, with Ivan Mosjoukine in the name part, one of the most thrilling screen fights ever photographed. This was Lieutenant-Colonel Chachatouni.

Three or four days later we were all moved to the civil prison, and there in a small cold cell I was to stay for several weeks.

Our food consisted of a bowl of soup and two small loaves of black bread, and our only exercise was to walk round and round the courtyard with the other prisoners,

or dance Russian dances in the centre. The other prisoners were civil cases of robbery, illegal arms-carrying, and assault. We three being the only political prisoners. Every day there was much coming and going: new prisoners coming in daily, including Communists who had failed in some article of their then very strict code, and others going out to their homes or to death without trial, often woken up at night and literally dragged along the stone corridors petrified with terror of what they could well imagine lay before them. The noise of these men being led away was not good for the nerves, especially as some came from my own cell, which filled and emptied every few days. I kept a diary of these days, but much of it was lost after my flight from Erivan.

On Christmas morning, 1920, a most welcome surprise attended me. It was a dinner sent by special messenger from Dr. Ussher, by now one of two remaining Americans who, having heard of my imprisonment, was striving for my liberation with amazing zeal. A medical missionary of twenty years' experience of Armenians, he feared neither devil nor Turk and, therefore, not knowing Bolshevism, feared the Russian still less. Pricked on an apple with a pin I deciphered "Cheer up." A note concealed in the bread told me that Dr. Ussher had only just heard of my position and he was trying to effect my release. Very much cheered by this unexpected happening, and comforted by the good food, I awaited the future with confidence. Whilst I waited, rumours fled round amongst the prisoners—England, the great England, was to help her little ally Armenia and assure her independence; Reuben Pasha, the late Minister for War, had organized the peasants and would shortly deliver us from the Russian yoke; and Dro, the

national hero, had been exiled to Russia, betrayed and fooled, and Armenia was no longer free.

We clung to every straw of hope; we embroidered every rumour that spoke to us of liberty and freedom of expression and belief. England had urged Armenia to the war against Turkey; naturally she would support her in her defeat; Wrangel had, in truth, been beaten, but France would smash Bolshevism and liberate us; the peoples of Europe, united by the League of Nations, would bemoan our slavery and insist on our liberty—so we thought.

Armenia was, however, forgotten. She had played her part; she had fought for the Allies—the great Allies; she had lost and, without a word, she fell, wearied by the labour of her youthful wings that had so lately wounded the air of liberty with her new-found independence. And I, silly little English patriot, bred in the Public School tradition and nurtured on Oman's incredible history book, still believed that when my country pledged her word such faith was inviolable.

We talked much in our prison, but our conversation was halting, for we feared the interrupters and were apprehensive of strange sounds in those long, echoing corridors where keys jingled so loudly and the rifle butts echoed again and again in our ears and our hearts.

Dr. Ussher came to see me and promised me freedom as soon as his negotiations were through. Every visit brought a reaction. I gave myself up to despair. I should never escape from this bleak prison. Cold and lice were stronger than hunger: but it is the cold that makes you cry.

Bolshevik commissars came, took statements and went, but I could never discover that there was any charge against me.

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Every day Dr. Ussher promised me I was to be released, but nothing happened till the end of January, when the order came through that I could leave the prison but not the town, and that Dr. Ussher was to hold himself responsible for my parole.

The first meal at Dr. Ussher's house and the clean sheets in which I slept were marvellous to the senses.

I now began to help Dr. Ussher and Mr. Peers with the care of the orphans. The other Americans had left and officially closed the relief station, but Dr. Ussher and Mr. Peers, who had an Armenian wife, determined to carry on as long as any supplies were left.

The difficulty of running the N.E.R., with constant Bolshevik interference, was enormous, but Dr. Ussher worked magnificently and was disheartened by nothing. The town was very quiet. Misery had not been alleviated. Carts plodded wearily through the snow, filled to the top with dead naked children who had been herded together in the local cinema and carried to the communal graves as they succumbed. The windows were full of propaganda pictures. Troops were everywhere. People were betrayed, hurried off to prison or put away almost every hour. The Secret Police was hard at work, and my chief occupation was to keep as much in the background as possible. Most of my former soldiers were in the Red Army now, but there was no saluting. I was urged to keep out of the main streets during the constant propaganda speeches that took place at the street corners, as several former officers had been set upon by their former troops, but I had no reason to fear a similar fate myself. The apparent quietness of the town, however, was only the calm before the storm. I soon discovered that schemes were afoot for a counter-revolution,

and as I was sworn to secrecy I knew there was much in it. Bit by bit plans were told me, but I was too scared of further imprisonment to take a leading part in the organization of the proposed *coup d'état*. The rumblings of counter-revolution were not unheard by the great Artabekov, and stringent precautions were taken to prevent an uprising in the town.

The real organizer in this attempt was Reuben Ter Minassian, the former Minister of War, who organized the peasants in the surrounding villages and made frequent visits into Erivan disguised in various ways.

On the 16th of February, 1921, a notice, signed by Artabekov, appeared on the walls to the effect that a slight disturbance had occurred in the south of Armenia and was directly due to the Menshevik Dashnakzutoun.<sup>1</sup> If any other disturbances were to take place, one hundred of the leading Armenians now in prison would be executed. There followed the names.

The morning of February 18th broke bright and cold, and the first thing I remember was waking to see Dr. Ussher standing by my bed saying: "Listen." We listened. Yes, it was certainly a distant shot. We rushed to the balcony. From the north of Erivan came the distinct sound of firing. It came nearer and nearer. Shouts came to us with the morning breeze. We looked at each other. Could this mean deliverance? Suddenly there came a banging on the door, and a young Armenian doctor named Stepanian burst in armed to the teeth and begged Dr. Ussher to let him take one of the N.E.R. horses, which he promised to return or make good its loss should it be killed. Dr. Ussher agreed, and while he gave Stepanian a cup of coffee,

<sup>1</sup> Armenian Social Revolutionary Federation.

I dressed hurriedly. Taking a small revolver with me I also drank some coffee, and the two of us left for the sound of firing, which had by now reached considerable force. The cries of "Haïstan, Haïstan" (Armenia, Armenia) increased in volume, and it sounded as if our deliverers had crossed the River Arax and were in the town. We ran into the streets and up the hill to the N.E.R. stables, and there Dr. Stepanian left me. Out of every house Armenians surged and joined me in the rush to greet our troops. On every roof appeared Armenian men and women armed with the rifles they had kept buried during the occupation. Isolated groups of Russians, panic-stricken, surrendered in surprising numbers. The excitement was tremendous. Behind the old fort we met our deliverers and we embraced each other in a delirium of joy. Down to the centre of the town we rushed, and there a vast horde of people rallied to the cry of "To the prison. To the prison." Borne along in the rush we soon reached the gates. Slowly they opened in response to the clamour, and the crowd stood still at the deathly stillness that came from the empty courtyard. The gates had been opened by two military officers, whose emaciated forms and terror-stricken faces bore witness of their ghastly experience. They pointed silently to the centre block of buildings and we moved forward in a mass, our fingers on the triggers of our rifles and revolvers. The doors stood open and in the first prison cell an indescribable sight met our gaze.

The floor and the walls were covered with blood, and all round the room lay the mangled bodies of Armenian Social Revolutionaries, faces unrecognizable by the havoc wrought by an axe that lay on the steps. Some of the bodies lay across the threshold as if they had been dragged



to the doorway and suddenly left. Outside the door in the corridor, which was filled by our silent peering irregulars, pools of blood made a trail that ended in a cellar. There, in a hastily dug pit, more bodies were found. Seventy-two in all massacred in the early morning to stop a revolt that was in the process of succeeding. There was nothing to do, so we returned and continued the rounding up of the Russians and the pressing of the main body away from the town. The man who actually ordered the massacre by machine-gun fire through the windows, and who finally went in himself to finish off the prisoners with an axe, was discovered later hiding in a cell. A month later he was burned alive in the very room in which he had committed his crime.

Sniping from the roofs of the houses accounted for several Russians, and the bodies of two young commissars lay on the pavement entirely naked and headless, having been surprised in their sleep by the relative of an Armenian who had been executed by the Bolsheviks not long before. As we were organizing ourselves in the square a body of peasant cavalry from Sassoun galloped into the town with the national flag at their head, and then continued their way to the north to join the main body.

In the meanwhile the military trend of events had been as follows. The Russian War Commissar, as soon as he saw his outposts driven in, took his main force to the railway station and manned a large armoured train which he ordered away the moment the station became too hot for him. When we arrived there we found all the other locomotives smashed to pieces and therefore were unable to follow. From then till the end of the month we fought the Russians and defended Erivan, sometimes advancing as

much as ten miles and again sometimes retiring to the very town walls. Backwards and forwards we went—a disorganized mass of patriots, of old and young, of women and maidens, armed with rifles or shovels or crowbars. Against us (who at the most numbered but fifteen hundred) were at least a thousand trained troops. On the 20th a Bolshevik cavalry brigade and a regiment of artillery arrived and still we held them back. The town of Erivan was fighting for its life. It knew what had happened in Baku after the counter-revolution there, and it was prepared to die fighting rather than be massacred.

The Bolsheviks had not dismantled the wireless sufficiently to prevent our engineers from using it, and we sent off three radio messages to the world, in Russian, French and English, to tell them of our fight for liberty and ask for help. There was no reply. Late in the night of the 27th, M. Veratzian, the provisional Prime Minister, arrived at Dr. Ussher's and told us that the Bolsheviks were advancing from the south-west and that the line there had broken. I had just come back from our northern front an hour or two before, and I knew that there, too, we were in great peril. Could Mrs. Veratzian and her little boy stay in his house for a while where she would be safer? He had decided when the Bolsheviks came within five miles of the town to withdraw the whole army through Erivan, taking all who wished to go and retire into Persia over the mountains. Dr. Ussher agreed, and we spent that night awake—Dr. Ussher, Mrs. Veratzian, her little boy (who died a month later from exposure during the retreat), Peers, whose conduct throughout had been second only to Dr. Ussher's for bravery and devotion, my aide-de-camp, Shura Khansorian, and myself. We were very quiet

while we awaited the news of disaster that we knew was inevitable.

The following day I had made up my mind what I was going to do, and a very stupid decision it turned out to be. I wanted to get to Constantinople, and the quickest way was across Turkey. There was one way out through the Bolshevik lines and that was by the north-east to Ashtarak, north-west to Alexandropol, south-west to Kars and Erzerum, and north-west to Trebizonde and the sea. I interviewed the Turkish Consul. He told me the Turks would let me through and I believed him. He wrote me a passport in Turkish, including Shura in a *laissez-passer*, which I could not read, and on my birthday, March 1st, Shura and I bade good-bye to Dr. Ussher, and with a bundle of letters for Alexandropol relatives of the townspeople of Erivan in my saddle-bag I fled, with Veratzian's permission, from the agony of the past three months, preferring the unknown to an inevitable retreat through snow and ice to Persia. Dr. Ussher told me by letter a year later he had a strange sense of impending dangers that day. I, on the other hand, was too keen to get away from the sound of the guns to notice anything.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

THE snow lay thickly on the ground, but on the roadway it was fairly good going. We passed several bodies of irregulars making their way to Erivan to help in the defence, and were of some help to a gun team bent on the same errand whose wheels were buried in the snow.

We spent the first night at Ashtarak with a cousin of Shura's who had led the revolt against the Bolsheviks in his own village, and had his former masters locked up in the village hall.

The following day we joined two Armenian spies who were off on duty to the north, and the four of us travelled together, taking short cuts that forced our Caucasian ponies up to their bellies in the snow. The sound of the guns could no longer be heard at the end of the second day. The third day I was snow-blind and in great pain, and many a mile did I walk, holding the long tail of my pony which Shura led from in front, whenever my weight was too heavy for comfortable progress. The fourth day we were both frost-bitten, and our companions had left us as we turned westwards.

We received extreme hospitality from the peasants in the villages, and they did what they could for my eyes, relief to pain being given by trying to open my eyes and gaze into a white bowl of cold, clear snow water.

Night overtook us once before we reached our predestined village, and wolves came within a hundred yards, only to be scared away by the noise of Shura's revolver.

I was rather depressed and urged Shura to turn back and let me go on alone, but he would not hear of it. As we rose higher, the ragged rocks burst through their snow covering under the heat of the sun, and the brown colour gave my eyes much needed relief. Icicles thawed from my beard, but I could not open my mouth with comfort owing to the scabs that had formed on my cheeks from the frost-bite.

Finally we came to the neutral zone between Armenia and the territory occupied by the Turks, and there I rested in a deserted hut whilst Shura looked round for signs of the Turkish outposts. On locating a small body of troops we moved on and hailed them with hands above our heads holding our *laissez-passers*. We were conducted, after some parley with a young officer in German, to a comfortably furnished room in a house, and there I was given Turkish coffee and a cigarette. As they saw I was snow-blind, they instructed the M.O. to treat me. I felt easier after this and managed to make out my surroundings, although everything was still very dark. I explained the object of my arrival and told them I was carrying the N.E.R. mail to their outpost at Alexandropol. They gave us food and telephoned for instructions. After a time we were ordered to mount and, accompanied by an escort, we moved down the mountains into the plain of Alexandropol. It was after dark when we reached the town, and we waited for an hour outside headquarters before we were led to the N.E.R. station-house. We staggered in with the mail-bag dead tired on the seventh day of our departure from Erivan, after a journey I would not repeat for untold gold.

In this station were two Americans, Milton Browne and Clark Martin, and a small circle of Armenian helpers.

They were kindness itself, and after food and a wash we were shown into beds with white sheets in a little room warmed by a blazing wood fire. Whilst we were undressing the Armenian N.E.R. interpreters were going through the mail-bag. Ninety-five per cent. of the letters were attacks on Turkey and the Turks, and as these were all rapidly burnt, I realized how lucky I had been not to have had the bag taken from me. It was the only piece of luck I was to have for four long months.

The next day I interviewed an intelligence officer and told him that I hoped to make my way to the sea either by Batum or Trebizonde. I was informed that the road to the north was impassable, but that I should probably be able to get to Erzerum all right. I was not, as yet, experienced in understanding the Turks, and therefore I felt that things were working themselves out comfortably. I did not realize that mere politeness can hide a multitude of disagreeable designs. The next day, at night, an A.S.C. soldier named Mahoney was smuggled into the house to see me, and I was surprised at his tale. He had been imprisoned in Erzerum with Colonel Rawlinson, and had been released to drive a car for the Turks on condition he showed them where certain useless spare parts of one of Colonel Rawlinson's cars had been buried. He had then escaped in Alexandropol and was in hiding till he could get to Batum. For this purpose Armenians were trying to arrange a guide for him. He left later, but we were destined to meet again.

On the morning of the 6th we were told to get ready to move, and Shura and I were placed under guard in a luggage van and set out for Kars. Then we learnt from the guards our real position. We were spies and

were to be imprisoned in Kars and tried by court martial. My spirits sank, but Shura was unperturbed. The journey was slow and tedious. There was only a slit through which to look out into the barren country, and the cold was intense. Kars, so lately lost by the Armenians, is a magnificent natural fortress, being built rather like Constantine in Algeria, with a deep gorge and a river between its citadel and last line of fortifications, whilst to its westward is a sloping plain guarded by a series of isolated forts. Here we detrained and were taken to a guard-room, where we were to stay three or four days. The day after our arrival we were called into the presence of the head of the Military Intelligence and interrogated at length.

There were two things I did not wish the Turks to know. Firstly, that I had helped to train the Armenian Army, and secondly, that Shura was a pure Armenian and not half Russian. The first position they did not seem particularly interested in, but as to Shura being anything but a pure Armenian—this they knew to be false. Up till now I still had hopes of freedom, but at the end of our interview it was clear I had hoped in vain.

"May I proceed with my friend to Constantinople?" I asked.

"No."

"Then what shall I do?"

"You will be imprisoned here."

"And my friend?"

"Ah, he is an Armenian." And the look in his eyes boded ill. Looking back now it seems I might have escaped much had I disclosed the fact that my father was in the British Government, but at the time, as I had got myself into the mess, I felt capable of getting myself out.

I did not know, however, that he had by then become President of the Board of Trade.

A few days later we were moved to a room that was to be our prison for the next month. Here I apologized humbly to Shura for bringing him into such trouble, but he protested he did not care. I was allowed to send out for food, and we ate tolerably well. We learnt from our guards that the prisons were full of Armenians and that we were spies and should suffer for it. By great ingenuity Shura managed to send a message to two Armenian prisoners in the next room. Tapping on the wall showed us there were people there, and by claiming to go to the latrine at the same time as our neighbours returned, he managed to pass notes into the room by throwing a small ball of paper through the door that opened to let them in. We learnt their names and that they had been officials at Kars before the surrender. We managed to obtain the loan of books from them after a week or two owing to the kindness of the sergeant of the guard: one who had been a prisoner himself in Russia during the European War.

About this time in England the Coalition Government signed the first commercial treaty with Russia, and E. F. Wise, M.P., then at the Board of Trade, has described to me how after M. Krassin and my father had signed it, the latter asked whether M. Krassin would now do something for him.

M. Krassin said he would be only too pleased.

My father then asked whether he would let his son out of jail. The amazement on M. Krassin's face can only be imagined. Anyway, by then it was too late as I was in Turkey, and as I was on the prescribed list in Erivan on the second capture of the town by the Bolsheviks



in early April, I am glad I was not handed back to the Russians at that time.

The days were monotonous enough. Shura and I read and talked and talked and read. Through the medium of French he taught me Russian and I taught him English. We tried to get into communication with the N.E.R. post at Kars but, although they knew of me at Erivan, they were too afraid to own me as one who worked at their station for several weeks. Besides, had they not ordered Dr. Ussher to leave his post and hand over the orphanage to the Bolsheviks? and had he not refused and thereby been disowned? We soon became verminous, and hours were passed in the slaughter of interesting parasites. As I had constantly expected to be searched, I kept my wrist-watch tied to the hairs of my left arm-pit, and my ring tied to my pubic hairs.

At the end of March we were suddenly taken out and led to a Turkish bath at the end of the town. There we had a glorious wash but, unhappily, had to put on our lice-covered clothing afterwards. We wondered what this sudden kindness meant, and two days later we knew. We were to go to Erzerum.

The train journey thither was cold and miserable, but we had two new prisoner companions, a Circassian named Yusuf Kemal, and a Kurd named Mustapha Maksout; both imprisoned for being Bolshevik spies; both having been tried in Kars and both condemned to death. This was cheerful for us. All the way along the railway line, clearing away snow and doing odd tasks, were Armenian prisoners, yellow with emaciation, their flesh visible through their ragged clothing, shod only in straw-filled, home-made cow-hide slippers, and their teeth chattering.

## THE QUESTING BEAST

A strange moaning came from many of them as they tried to wield their heavy spades. Kemal's eyes filled with tears at the sight, but when you have been through<sup>1</sup> what he had, you cry very easily and are very emotional. We stayed one night in a snow-covered hut by the railway line, and moved on even more slowly the next day. We told each other stories of our lives—I leaving out the true object of my visit to Armenia, and Shura insisting on his Russian origin, and indeed this was not difficult, since he had been born and bred in South Russia and never visited Armenia till the revolution. As we descended the last few miles to Erzerum the snow gave way to green grass and vegetation and the change was a welcome relief. At the station we were told to follow a new guide, and we walked to the military headquarters, where we were finally put into a room the floor of which was covered with pools of water that had formed themselves beneath holes in the roof through which melted snow had found its way.

We chose the driest spots we could: Kemal and Maksout near the window, Shura and I near the door.

The next day an officer entered with a smith and four pairs of leg-irons. I do not think I ever felt so hopeless and despondent as when I saw these. It seemed the end of everything to me. We all felt the same, and not a word was spoken. As the clang of the hammered rivets sounded on the chains placed on Kemal's ankles, tears fell from his bent head, and his whole frame was shaken with emotion. His nerves were worn to shreds. Maksout's chains were almost fixed when another officer came in and ordered the removal of the chains. This was again done in silence, and finally we four were left to our thoughts.

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Chapter Nine.

We did not speak for some seconds, and then Kemal began to rave against the Turks and it was some time before Maksout could comfort him. In this very room, we were told, Colonel Rawlinson had been imprisoned with his three English soldiers, but they had left the day before for Trebizonde and were to be released. Unhappily for them it did not turn out so simply, for on arrival at Trebizonde they discovered their release had not come through, and they were forced to return to Erzerum to wait a further period of time before Freedom opened her arms to them.

They had originally gone to Erzerum to collect the arms of the defeated Turks under the armistice treaty made between Constantinople and the British, but had been caught by the uprising of Mustapha Kemal Pasha and been imprisoned—delegates of the conquering nation captured by the defeated.

Outside our windows in a courtyard the imprisoned Armenian officers of the Kars garrison took their daily exercise. I never saw a body of men look so despondent except, perhaps, the wretched prisoners working on the Kars-Erzerum railway line.

There were General Beg-Piroomov and General Araratian and several others that Shura recognized, and one young lieutenant who every day came and saluted me and smiled up at our window. I never knew his name, but he was the only one who seemed to keep cheerful, and he still managed to look smart in spite of his torn uniform. Shura threw a note down explaining who we were, but the authorities got to know of this and we were moved once more a few days later.

About this time another blow befell me: none other

than the departure of Shura, who was sent to work with the Armenian soldier prisoners in the munition factory. I did not know at the time where he was going. The soldiers simply came in and told him to make up his bundle, and he left.

My friend had gone. I was indeed alone. We were then moved to another prison.

This, the sixth place of imprisonment I had been in since December in Erivan, Kars and Erzerum, was a room overlooking the barrack square, with three windows without glass and barred by barbed wire. It was very cold. Kemal, Maksout and I then began three months of close confinement. We had no exercise but our walk to and from the latrine. We had no food but two loaves of black bread a day that ran through you like castor oil. They were about six inches round by three deep. We had three things to watch whilst we were here—troops being trained in the square below; sparrows flirting on the barbed wire; and the daily arrival of the bread cart drawn by a mare, her little foal keeping pace at her side. With the bread cart came the Armenian lieutenant who had smiled at us before, and whose duty it was to draw the rations for his brother officers. He soon discovered our whereabouts, and his smile was the only bright thing of the day. We witnessed a regimental beating of a deserter; machine-gun training in which an incompetent soldier was hit half round the barrack square by an officer, first on one side of his face and then on the other; and the leading in to headquarters of two Armenian deserters, and the carrying of them out afterwards with sacks over their faces. All we knew of the interim were the screams we heard in the neighbouring block of buildings.

## THE QUESTING BEAST

Kemal told us tales of his experiences in the Military School at Constantinople, and Maksout of his experiences in Kurdistan. I raised smiles when I said London was more than eight miles from end to end, and that most of the streets in the centre were paved with wood. To Kemal I spoke French, to Maksout, broken Russian; the two spoke Turkish between them, and we managed to carry on three-party conversation in Russian.

We watched spiders in their webs, and hunted daily for lice. Maksout later on began to develop a mild form of dysentery, and the three of us grew paler and paler and thinner and thinner. Armenian prisoners in chains shuffled to the same latrine as we did, and many suffered from worms. My constitution held out in an incredible way, but my nerves were wearing themselves out. We knew we were waiting for the end, but we did not know when or how it would come. The hopelessness of semi-starvation and the lack of something to do or even think about drove us nearly demented.

A climax came in a fight between Maksout and Kemal over watching a spider catch a fly. The guard intervened and saved bloodshed just in time.

Nights were interminably long. Days always the same. I began to think more than I had ever done before and search for the reason for things. I thought on God and religion, on war and peace, and on my strange life from the age of seventeen to now. I was just twenty-two. As the weeks rolled by I did not care whether I lived or died, and as the weeks became months I longed to get away from it all and die at once.

I drew a calendar on the wall and marked off the days. I wrote up a list of months, and we all took turn to jab

with a pencil and shut eyes to see when it would all finish.

I also wrote on the wall "*Après les nuages vient le soleil; les beaux jours reviendront,*" and Stevenson's "Requiem," and almost every day Kemal asked me to translate the latter to him. I drew on match-boxes, picked up in the latrine, little fortune-telling cards and told their fortunes and my own innumerable times. Strangely enough, however bad Kemal's or my fortune turned out to be, Maksout's was always the worst. Death followed him after every shuffle.

Kemal decided if ever he were released to go into commerce, and he covered his part of the wall with calculations as to how much he could make. Maksout had a new plan of escape every night, but he only told me as he did not speak to Kemal after the fight. I sold my silver Caucasian belt to Maksout for a Turkish pound in case I was ever free.

April passed into May and May into June. The snow was rapidly melting from the hills that we could see from our window. In the evening the shadows chased each other in and out of the rugged crevices and the whole range changed colour, and every evening in a different way. And the clouds that formed made strange shapes and filled my mind with fancies, and I longed for the evenings because of this beauty.

We had a slight earthquake one day, but it did not burst our prison walls, and it only mocked us by reminding us of a new and possible means of escape. Maksout's illness was very distressing, but no doctor ever came, in spite of our asking the guard.

Kemal still believed the Bolsheviks would take Kars

and Erzerum and release us. I alone dreaded this. Ramadhan made our bread late, but we did receive one bowl of soup on the last day—the feast day; and for us it was a feast.

One Sunday morning in the middle of June I awoke to find Kemal and Maksout watching the barrack square with apprehension. I joined them, and there below was a force of gendarmerie. I saw nothing surprising about this, but Kemal insisted it looked bad. Time passed and there was silence between us. Suddenly a sergeant entered.

“Maksout.”

“Yes.”

“The Town Commandant wants to see you.”

“Do I bring my bundle?”

“No. Come on.”

Maksout shrugged his shoulders and went out. Kemal gave one despairing cry and fell on his palliasse. I watched from the window our little bowed friend between two stalwart gendarmes.

I waited three, four, five minutes. There was no sound but Kemal's weeping, and then I heard a volley and I knew. Kemal heard it too and came to me like a child for comfort, shaking with sobs. He was only in the early twenties, and he had been amongst too much of this sort of thing.

I did my best for him. I spoke of God and the after-life and Spiritualism, and only in the latter was he interested. Then Death did not matter? I said it did not. He did not believe in God. I said it was enough that he believed in the Soul of Man: the Creator of that would not mind if the author's name were left out. He did not believe in the Prophet. I said few people really do in their

own. I calmed him somewhat by stimulating him to thought, and we both waited for the next summons.

The guard obligingly told us Maksout had been shot, Kemal was to be shot on the morrow and I the next day. Then an officer came in and a priest, and Kemal clung to the latter's knees and asked him what had become of Maksout. He would not say. In the name of the Prophet? What do traitors know of the Prophet? Religions are very much alike I thought.

Anyway they took away his bundle—just another shirt, the belt I had sold him and a few rags. They then took away his palliasse. I wrote four lines of verse on the wall above his old bed; his name and home; the date and a crescent, a six pointed star, a cross and a question mark. Kemal then wrote it in Turkish characters underneath.

The next day passed and Kemal breathed again. Another day came and wore on to its close. There was a knock on the door. Entered the same sergeant.

"The Commandant wishes to see you."

"Who? Me?"

"Yes."

I followed him out of the room.

Kemal stood watching me go, mumbling. "Pauvre Baldvine, pauvre Baldvine."

I was pleased it was to be all over. I was tired; very tired of it all. I mounted the stairs and was ushered into the presence of two senior officers.

I was to be released, they told me: to be exchanged for a Turkish officer. I was to go to Trebizonde that night. I smiled. Did I not believe? I shook my head. It was true. "*Haak er rassoul allah.*" I told them Colonel



Rawlinson had also gone to Trebizonde and come back. But this time it was different.

I was past caring. I returned to Kemal, who greeted me with an embrace. I told him what had happened. Kemal thought for a while and then he told me it was because of Colonel Rawlinson: for if I were shot in Erzerum he would hear of it, and so they were taking me away to do it elsewhere.

An hour later an English soldier was ushered into our room. It was Mahoney whom I had seen that night in Alexandropol. He had been found there, been imprisoned in Kars and was now to be released.

Another hour and a tall sergeant-major I had never seen before told us two to follow him. I took my bundle, which consisted of a pair of felt boots and my overcoat, and bade farewell to Kemal. The three of us crossed the barrack square, and when I looked back as we went through the gate I saw Kemal's pale sad face watching us still.

Outside was an old brougham drawn by a pair of horses. We got inside and soon left Erzerum behind. Ten miles out we spent the night at a Khan, and for the next many days we journeyed on, sometimes on foot going up or down hills, and sometimes in the old brougham when it was level going.

Mahoney and I were treated very well at the different Khans, and much curiosity was evinced as to our identity. I certainly must have looked rather odd, since my hair was by now in curls to the nape of my neck and my cheeks hollow with lack of food. My beard was unclipped and my moustache straggled wildly.

I still expected that the worst was yet to come, but I was wrong and was able to enjoy the scenery and conversa-

tion with German-speaking Turks. I was also quite thrilled to think I was following the course Xenophon followed and to be quite correct, said loudly to myself both "*Thalatta, Thalatta,*" and "*Thalassa, Thalassa,*" when I first caught sight of the sea.

The long night was breaking, and when we entered Trebizonde it was the dawn that had come.

## CHAPTER NINE

So little is known of the much misjudged Armenians, and even less of their country, that I think it might be of interest to refresh our minds as to what this people has done for civilization. Since they have been so scandalously betrayed by our own nation, the least we can do is to appreciate their history and service to culture.

It is not generally realized, for instance, that the walls of St. Sophia in Stamboul were rebuilt in the tenth century by the Armenian architect Tiridates, that the dome of the cathedral at Aix-la-Chapelle, of the church of St. Satairus at Milan and St. Peter's in Rome are Armenian in style and not, as often supposed, Byzantine-Roman. The cupola dome of St. Sophia itself is also Armenian, built from the design of the Armenian Sinan. Also the magnificent tomb of Theodoric the Great at Ravenna was built by an Armenian named Daniel.

Among modern artists in the Near East was the famous gold-worker, Mkritch Melconian; the precious stone engraver, Mkritch Benderian; the Duzian family who designed all the coins for the Ottoman Empire; the Balian family who were the architects of most of the famous palaces at Constantinople; and Vordik Kimhadjian, perhaps the most famous ebony worker the world has ever known. Nubar Pasha, the great Egyptian statesman, was an Armenian; whilst all the technical posts of importance in

agriculture, finance, medicine, chemistry and scholarship in the Ottoman Empire were held by Armenians.

In Russia, Alexander II's right-hand man and Prime Minister was the Armenian Count Michael Loris-Melikov. The celebrated Admiral Makarov of the Russo-Japanese War and General Samonov, who held up the Germans on the Polish front in 1915, were both Armenians.

Malcolm Khan, Persian Minister to London, was also an Armenian. In the U.S.A. were or are such well-known Armenians as Dr. M. Kassabian, the X-ray martyr; Dr. Minas Gregory, the mental expert of the Bellevue Hospital; Dr. Sarobian, the dye expert; Dr. H. M. Dadourian, professor of physics at Yale. Thomas Karwin, an Armenian, was a State Governor and Secretary to the Treasury.

Italy, Hungary, Roumania, all had Armenians in their high offices. The first silkworms were introduced by two Armenians into France in the reign of Henri IV; the first public café was opened in 1672 in Paris by Pascal, also an Armenian.

Musicians, painters and actors of this versatile race have been well known all over Europe. The Swedish diplomat, Baron d'Ohsson Mouradgea, author of "The History of the Mongols"; twenty of the great Napoleon's imperial bodyguard; the aide-de-camp to Eugene de Beauharnais—all were Armenians. Finally, out of five hundred Armenians in the French Foreign Legion, only fifty came safely through the Great War. A people so rich in history, so gifted in the arts, so old in Christianity, should be better known in England and better appreciated. In my book, already referred to, I deal with their great betrayal, and tell of their tragedy in full. One or two interesting characters

I met during my time in the Near East can, with advantage, be enlarged upon, as they were closely concerned with my life.

I will take Joseph Markossian first. He was a French Armenian who had served part of the Great War in the Armenian Legion, attached to the French Army. About twenty-three years old, he had arrived in Armenia to take part in the Turkish War, and held the rank of probationer-officer. A fluent linguist, he spoke Armenian, Russian, French, German, Greek, Turkish and English.

I first came across him in Erivan and, being interested in his high spirits and linguistic ability, took particular notice of him and used him as an interpreter at one time and another. His frank and open nature completely deceived me, but this was due to my lack of experience with cocaine users. This was his vice, and the effect on his character was to make him an inveterate liar, a thief, and completely unscrupulous individual. He, it was, I discovered later, who told the Russians I was a spy, and caused my imprisonment. When I was in prison he went to friends of mine to whom I had confided my silver Caucasian sword, informed them that I needed it, received it and sold it. He told harrowing tales of how I was starving to other Armenian friends of mine—this was more or less true. As a result he was enabled to live comfortably on the food they gave him to give to me. During my incarceration he was imprisoned himself for ten days in my cell for theft, and he never ceased to fill me with tales of how he was arranging for my release. At the counter-revolution he was arrested for being a Russian "Tcheka" agent and he expected me to release him, but, having heard of his behaviour, this I refused to do at first, though later

I repented. After my flight from Erivan he escaped also to Turkey, and was imprisoned with other Armenian prisoners of war. There, in company with a Bulgarian Armenian named Chalgadzian, he bought his liberty at the expense of betraying three intending fugitives, who were caught on his information and shot. He waited in Trebizonde for some time and was then sent back to Russia. I last heard of him in prison in Moscow, where he was posing as a Frenchman and appealing for release on those grounds. The French War Office asked me about him, and then refused to have anything to do with him—since he never had been a French subject. Where he is now I do not know; but if he has been able to find cocaine in Russia by now he is probably insane.

Another extraordinary character of those Bolshevik days in Erivan was Artabekov, the head of the Tchezvychaika or Secret Police of the Caucasus. An ex-Russian Imperial officer of wealthy family, he had thrown in his lot with the Bolsheviks in their early days, and been trained in Petrograd and Moscow under Ouritzky, whose murderer, the young student Kanegnissar, he had tortured with his own hands. In appearance he was small, and entirely dressed in black leather. He had a square-cut red beard and a most charming smile and voice, but his blue eyes were small and set close together. He never moved without a guard of three men, and always walked in the streets with his right hand tucked in the front of his coat, his hand on his Mauser butt. Whenever there were reprisals to be made or new territory to be "bolshevized," Artabekov was there to direct. He had an exceptional faculty for scenting impending trouble, and thus being able twenty-four hours ahead to escape. He enjoyed doing his own killing and

was extremely sadistically inclined. At one turn he had killed a hundred officers, including the hero of Galicia, General Russky. He left Erivan twenty-four hours before the counter-revolution, having given orders for the massacre of prisoners that I mentioned in the previous chapter. He remained for some time in Tiflis, after Georgia was overrun by the Russians at the instigation of Stalin, and established a reign of terror amongst the nationally minded peasants. He particularly enjoyed long conversations with his victims, whom he used to ask where lay their predilections for the coming bullet. An unpleasant man who led an unpleasant life and met a ghastly death. While flying over Georgia on one of his rounds of inspection in 1925, the aeroplane burst into flames and he was burnt to death.

In Erzerum (where I was imprisoned in April—my sixth place of incarceration) I had two companions who had both been condemned to death. The elder of the two, a Kurd named Mustapha Maksout, had had an interesting life. Shortly after his birth Maksout was sent to his uncle's home in Kurdistan, where he became, as all Kurds do become, a good hunter and good marksman, talking Turkish and Kurdish equally well.

At the age of about seventeen he descended into the plains and sought work in the Kharpoot area. Eventually he entered the service of an elderly Turkish Bey, who possessed a very beautiful wife to whom Maksout became a devoted servant. As is the custom in those parts of the world, he ate at the same table as his master, and when the latter was forced to leave home on business, which was a common occurrence, Maksout's devotion for the wife became an obsession. When the time came for military service Maksout left for Erzerum, and during his term the

love for his master's wife remained firm in his heart, and he looked eagerly forward to his return to Kharpoot.

Shortly after his service was finished the Turkish Bey fell ill and died, and Maksout was free to pay court to the sorrowing widow. When the period of mourning was over the widow, realizing the love Maksout bore her, promised him her hand in marriage at the end of the year. Just when the future held the rosiest prospects of a happy married life, the war broke out and Maksout was called up. In 1916 he was captured by the Russians on the Erzerum front and was imprisoned in Russia. In 1917, when the Revolution broke out, he had hopes of liberty, but it was not till the rise to power of Lenin that he was able to leave the prisoners' camp. He became a Bolshevik, and was made President of the Turkish section for Bolshevik propaganda in Baku, Azerbaijan. When relations between Turkey and Russia became more friendly he was allowed, after repeated requests, to return to his home. With his pockets full of gold roubles for propaganda work amongst the Kurds, he left for Kharpoot, full of hope for his immediate marriage and consequent peace and happiness. But it was not to be. At Nachitchevan he was arrested as a Bolshevik spy and sent to Kars. Here he fell in with our other fellow-prisoner, Yusuf Kemal, and the two were condemned to death by a military tribunal. Maksout, a confirmed atheist with an exceedingly kind and sympathetic nature, was shot outside our prison on June 12th, brave to the last, yet full of hunger for the wife who had been snatched from him at the eleventh hour by a relentless and mocking fate.

My other fellow-prisoner, Yusuf Kemal, was a Circassian; an extremely handsome, tall man of about twenty-



three who had a very white skin, black hair and blue eyes. Entering the Turkish Army in 1915 as a cadet, he was commissioned and sent to the Roumanian front. In 1916 he was captured by the Russians and sent to Siberia. When the second Revolution broke out and the prisoners were released, Kemal became an ardent Communist and longed for the overthrow of the Pasha system in Turkey, under which he had suffered in the Military Schools of Constantinople. Becoming infuriated by the despotism of the Bolsheviki, he escaped and joined the white forces in Northern Mongolia. During the subsequent fighting he was captured by the Reds and imprisoned. A few weeks later Admiral Koltchak routed the Bolsheviks and took over the prisoners. As these had all served, at one time or another, with the Red Army, they were all put to the sword; and how Kemal managed to escape in the midst of the general mêlée he never could quite explain. He wandered, half starved, to the westward, and after countless adventures—hiding in woods, staying with friendly moujiks, and feeding on roots—he decided the only thing to do was to join the Red Army once more and ask to be sent to Turkey for propaganda purposes. He was sent to Baku, and there edited a Communist paper for circulation among the Mohammedans of Azerbaijan and the Northern Caucasus. Finally he was sent on a mission to treaty with Mustapha Kemal for the exchange of prisoners. General Kazim Kara Bekir Pasha, commander of the eastern front, had no respect for Bolsheviks and, managing to separate the mission by false messages, summarily executed all the Mohammedan members of the mission, and treated only with the Russian ones. Kemal, having been an officer in the Ottoman Army, was allowed the

privilege of a trial, and was condemned to death and sent to Erzerum for execution. When I moved from Erzerum I left him behind, and some eight months later I received a letter from him saying he had been released and was now a tailor in Angora. His letter was addressed: "Alver Bodin, Bad Klub, London," and it says much for the G.P.O. that it was delivered to my club, where the Turkish stamp attracted my attention, and Kemal's name on the back of the envelope showed me for whom it was intended.

During my time in prison, both in Armenia but more especially in Turkey, there was nothing to do but think, and days would pass in that way till the thoughts began to revolve at an ever-increasing speed, and a dread of losing my reason came over me. I described in my former book what methods I took to counteract this fear, but I think it well to mention how this solitude and time for thought affected me mentally. In the first place, I had time to think back over my whole past and wonder on the reason for my misfortune. I recalled my frightened and inferiority-complexed boyhood; the finding of my feet in the Army; the annoyance that came as a reaction to that boyhood; and my confidence and moderate personal success as a soldier in two armies; and I realized how comparatively easy it had been for me to attain what I wanted, and having attained it, to have no desire to hold it. I thought on ambition and the unsatisfactory results that followed its realization in my case. I wondered if the object of life were material ambition, and—if not—what was the main goal of a man's existence. That was the first course of philosophical thought.

My next was the life of prisoners and starvation, and,

in the first case, I knew that for ever after my sympathies would be with such people, and that I should break any law that forbade me to help those that ever attempted to escape. As regards starvation—it was something I had experienced, and experienced thoroughly. Dirt and lice I had encountered, of course, in France during the war; but month after month unable to wash, covered with lice the whole time, waking and sleeping numbed with cold—all these things made me think of others who might be in a similar plight; thus my thoughts went to those people who might, in England, be cold amidst warmth, hungry amidst plenty.

It was not a far way from that thought to economics, and in that prison out of my doubts, my disappointments, and my hopes, was born the determination to help in building a new form of society where these things I had experienced should be unknown.

My third range of thought covered hope and patience. That this hope was narrow and only confined to getting away from prison, I admit at once; but hope as a feeling offered much scope for thought. That it should exist so universally; that it is always a conscious urge for something different; that it can keep men and women, and even nations, going when all else has failed—it is indeed a gift offered by man's fairy godmother to counteract the evil destiny inspired by the uninvited one. And patience—not to be confused with acquiescence—I am not so sure that I have learned that lesson in the accepted term. I think I know how to wait for birth, growth, and finally decay, but I find myself incapable of that patience that cries "wait" when you are in an aeroplane crashing rapidly to earth—let us say a political aeroplane to make it clearer.

Lastly—and here my thoughts spent countless hours—I pondered on religions: how they started, what they have become, and what is meant by Faith. The result of my prison gave me faith—not in churches or priests or candles, but in a Protective Power of Infinite Grace and Infinite Beauty. I am not concerned with virgin births, trinities, prayer-books, or liturgy. I have no time for dogma or churches; but the life of Christ, as written years after, altered and re-translated, still seems to me to be an ideal one worthy of following to the fullest extent possible. The lives of Buddha and Confucius are perhaps more full of thought and philosophy, but the fact that a man was crucified for attacking orthodoxy and a materialistic conception of life, that he feared no man and did harm to no one, that he forgave and bore no malice, that his love was unbounded and not concentrated on one individual, brought a new, indefinable Something into my life, without which I should be the lonelier and the weaker. To tie up this Christ with an immaculate conception, a trinity, and a bodily resurrection, is pure orientalism, and although the beauty of his life may be unharmed thereby in the minds of many, to me it is a case of being scarcely able to see the wood for the trees—a limelight of self-radiancy that mystifies and darkens.

When I hear good churchmen extolling the virtues of charity as we know it to-day, or church-going politicians praising our conception of justice, the words of the great Lao-Tse come always to my mind: “When the great Tao<sup>1</sup> left the hearts of man, Justice and Charity first entered them.”

And what more wonderful Christian message is there

<sup>1</sup> God.

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than that of the Ma-Baharata: "Greatness is to take the common things of life and to walk truly among them; and holiness is a great love and much serving."

So my religion is a medley, but, like many churchmen, it is a very real part of my life.

After my release from Erzerum I was taken under escort along the Russian-built road to Trebizonde, some 250 miles, a great distance of which I was allowed to walk.

This northern part of Anatolia is exceedingly beautiful, being an alternate succession of plains, mountains and valleys, very little wooded except between Gumash Khane and Trebizonde, but apparently very fertile though uncultivated. Many wild flowers cover the grass for miles around.

The area round Erzerum is much troubled by frequent earthquakes, though never very serious ones, for the trembling is chiefly on the lower slopes of the hills, and Erzerum lies in the heart of the valley. Apart from the villages in which we stayed the night, we passed scarcely a house—the villages seeming to be spaced in that part of the country at equal distances, a day's march one from the other. We fell in with several Turks on our way to Trebizonde, some of whom were bound for Constantinople in order to embark for Arabia and make their journey to Mecca. They were friendly people and are, at heart, exceedingly peaceable until inflamed by their priests, or ordered by the Pasha class to war or massacre. They are extremely servile to their Pashas, and lead a kind of feudal existence in those parts of Anatolia that surround the bigger towns.

Since Mustapha Kemal has limited the power of the priesthood, things will probably be better in the future,

and if the Turks are allowed a reasonable period of peace, one day they may become a very different race to that which we have hitherto known.

At Trebizonde I was put on board an Italian boat and finally reached Constantinople.

Constantinople at that time, 1921, was ruled by the English, French and Italians, and was filled by a greater collection of different nationalities than has perhaps ever been assembled in one town. I spent a few days there, during which time I bought a vest and a pair of pants; nor did I omit to have my trousers boiled. I left for England on the Balkan Express. On the Serbian frontier I was arrested as a Bolshevik spy. This was almost the last straw. The more I protested in my broken Russian that I was English and that my speech was enough to show that I could not be a Slav, the more I was told that I was only pretending I could not speak well. I was sent under escort to Belgrade, but, as my guard would not let the light be turned out in my compartment, I had no sleep that night. At Belgrade the Police Chief believed my story and the guard was withdrawn.

I arrived in London dressed in my Russian shirt, my trousers, my Russian boots and *papach*.<sup>1</sup> I spent the next day in buying clothes.

My nerves were in a bad state, and I was very weak and tired. A few weeks at home soon showed me I should have to get away alone somewhere if I wanted to get any better, but it was difficult to make people understand this. I was almost afraid to move. Every time I walked a few paces I involuntarily expected a guard to hold me up. It seemed incredible that I had volition—that I could go out

<sup>1</sup> Woolly Russian hat.

for a walk and return when I liked. I suffered very badly from insomnia and was fearful of going to sleep, for I always dreamt that I was back in prison. This dream still recurs, and even now I have it at least once a month. I disliked meeting strangers, and people's questions irritated me to a point of rudeness which they could never understand. One member of my family asserted that all I had been through had been invented, and that I had not been to prison at all. It was all I could do to restrain myself. I ran out of the room into the garden, and my nerves giving way, I wept for an hour.

I nearly shot myself that night, but I could not hold the revolver steady enough, and this brought me to my senses.

But enough—I know much about the nervous system, and am less surprised at murders and suicide during “temporary insanity” than formerly.

## CHAPTER TEN

I FLED to the Kiplings at Burwash, where I stayed for a few days and then, borrowing E.K.'s little two-seater Singer, I set off on a tour to Devonshire. Unfortunately the car would not go farther than Dorsetshire, so I stayed a few days with an elderly lady who had lived near us in Worcestershire when I was a child until repairs were effected. She was exceedingly sympathetic, and we spent hours amidst the ruins of an abbey on her property, where a few months earlier she had discovered the earliest chessmen ever found in Great Britain—four pieces in all, made of walrus tooth and standing some six inches high. These chessmen were pushed by a kind of croupier's rake on chequered paving, and are now in a museum in London. An old gardener who had been doing most of the excavating was bent upon discovering the black king, and would be heard digging and shovelling, muttering the while: "Oi'll foind un; Oi'll foind the old black bugger yet." It has not so far been found. I returned to Burwash and then went back to Worcestershire.

In September my parents took me to Aix-les-Bains, where eventually an old friend of Eton days joined us. We made trips to the Grande Chartreuse and other places of interest, but the place depressed me. I had a feeling of extreme claustrophobia, and the mountains that surrounded the town were ever pressing in upon me and making a



prison again. I was glad when we left for Paris, where we stayed a few days.

That winter, back in England, I was to see much of a young woman to whom, in January, I became engaged. I own with shame that I clung to this as a means of getting right away and starting an entirely different mode of life, but I do not think I was in love. It appeared that a little flirting should only end in marriage, and I accepted the verdict of others. I was engaged on January 22nd, and early in February I was offered the post of a Special Correspondent of the *Morning Post* to proceed at once to Kenya, via South Africa, and write up the story of the Indian question, then as now a cause of great dissension among the settlers, both Asiatic and European. I told the editor that it was quite likely that I should not agree with the orthodox English point of view, whereupon he replied that he would not publish all my articles, but only those of particular interest to the point of view of the newspaper. With an arrangement of so much for articles published and expenses paid, I left Waterloo to embark on the *Kinfauns Castle* at Southampton.

G.L.B. (who later married Elsie Kipling and was my fellow-traveller in Algeria two years previously) was to accompany me as far as Madeira. My fiancée came to see me off, and as the train steamed away G.L.B. remarked: "You'll never marry her." He was quite right.

The joy of getting away from England that February, 1922, was to me like escaping from another prison. The moment the boat started, the curse of travelling on English steamship lines descended on us. Some officious passenger took upon himself the idea that we had all come on board to play silly games and enter sweepstakes, and from the

moment he started what he called "organizing" there was no peace. Should you place a deck-chair in a secluded spot and settle down to read, he would come up and start: "I say, do you mind awfully, old chap" (these people are always very friendly, even directly after breakfast), "moving your chair the other side; we want to play deck-quoits." You move with a sickly smile and settle down once more at the other end of the ship. Two minutes later it will be: "I say, frightfully sorry to trouble you, but some of the chaps want to play deck-tennis and your chair's in the light." You do not try to smile this time; you merely move to the writing-room and try again. Ten minutes pass, and suddenly in comes the pest again. "I say, you fellows, who wants a ticket for the sweepstake, to guess how far the ship'll go to-day?" I protest I do not want to know, but it is no use. "I say, be a sport; go on." And you do, for the sake of peace. This went on till we reached Madeira, where we disembarked G.L.B. and took on W. L. Jenkins, American Consul at Madeira, who was bound for Nairobi, also as Consul. After Madeira all the English went entirely insane and ran round and round the ship throwing things in buckets or over nets; eating biscuits and then trying to whistle intelligible tunes with their mouths full; or sitting on the deck with a broom handle under their legs, pushing other people with their feet. There was no peace at all.

Opposite the West African coast we received a wireless message that there was a general strike in Johannesburg, and the next few days the news became more serious. On arrival at Capetown the place was humming with excitement, and the rebellion was in process of being broken by the arrival of General Smuts himself in Johannesburg.

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I disembarked at Capetown and called at the *Cape Times* office. I met the late Sir Thomas Smart, then Minister of Agriculture, who took me to listen to a debate in the Parliament building. I also had an interview with General Smuts, who had just returned from the Rand. I was surprised at the gentleness of his personality and interested in the mixture of cunning and mysticism in his eyes. I wired the *Morning Post* for permission to go up to the Rand, but I was told to go on to Kenya. The seriousness of the Rand rebellion was not sufficiently realized in England owing to the scarcity of news, so I will recount the story.

The trouble started with a dispute between the white and black workers, coupled to a threat of wage reduction and the closing of the Kimberley diamond mines. This was followed by a miners' strike. Almost immediately there was an outbreak of dynamite outrages on the Rand, and it appears that the strike was not only well organized but was taking on the appearance of a rebellion.

On Tuesday, February 28th, 1922, the first loss of life was reported from Boksburg, when three strikers were killed and four policemen wounded. Johannesburg was plunged into darkness, and two dynamite explosions were reported from Benoni. The Ministers of Justice and Defence had already hurried to Johannesburg and interviewed the Town Council, who assured them they could organize the essential services with the help of volunteers, since Government protection had been guaranteed to all strikers returning to work. As an example of the Nationalist attitude in the early days, the following is of interest. 'A' resolution passed by a meeting of Dutch farmers at Krugersdorp: "That this meeting of farmers severely condemns the strikers' violent methods as liable to lead to bloodshed. We strongly

criticize the Government's attitude in promising Government protection to those who returned, the strike (previous to the Government's appeal) having been one of the most peaceful known. If we are commandeered we are not willing to be used to suppress the strike or to escort scabs to work. We must be regarded as an impartial force to maintain law and order, and offer our support to the Government at any time for the maintenance of law and order."

Wednesday, the 1st of March, passed quietly, but everyone expected further trouble. Strikers armed with bludgeons, knob-kerries, iron pipes and steel rods, and drilled by ex-soldiers, some in steel hats, held meetings on the Union Ground. Benoni was in a state of suspense, and a detachment of South African Mounted Rifles arrived from Pretoria. Aeroplanes flew over the East Rand looking for mounted commandos, which were expected to come in from the country to the help of the strikers. Forty-seven thousand natives left work. Captain Fulford, District Commandant of Police on the East Rand, asked for martial law as a result of the Boksburg affair.

On the 2nd twenty thousand strikers were present at the funeral of their three comrades in Boksburg. Most of those attending wore badges of crepe and red. The procession was two miles long, and consisted of several well-disciplined cyclist companies. At Krugersdorp four women and one man were charged with violence. It appeared that the women attacked two workers who were under police protection, attacking them with sjamboks and pieces of hose-pipe.

On the 3rd there was an ominous silence, and the Press began to publish the news that the strike was breaking and many hundreds had gone back to work.

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On Sunday, the 5th, the strikers held a meeting where moderate speeches were made until a man named Fisher, who received a great reception, asked who were the members of the Augmented Executive who had voted for an unconditional surrender to the Government. One of the members, Mr. Naismith, rose and refused to divulge any names. This was the turning point. A general strike was declared on the 7th, and hooliganism increased to a large extent. On the following day the Transvaal Horse Artillery, the Imperial Light Horse, the Transvaal Scottish, the Railway and Harbour Rifles, the Pretoria Regiment and the Ambulance Corps were mobilized. That day there were strikers' attacks on the Primrose Mine, and also attacks at Ferreirastown, Vrededorp and Brixton. All bakers' shops were forcibly closed by the strike commandos, and the Chief of the Police issued the following warning to stop assemblies:

First action: The pilot will fly his machine round the gathering at a height of approximately five hundred feet and fire red lights as a warning to disperse.

Second action: If this has no effect he will fly low over the gathering and fire several bursts of machine-gun fire into the air.

Third action: If the gathering still remains he will open fire.

The casualty list of the 8th of March was over one hundred. Native workers were hounded through the streets of Ferreirastown by strikers and a crowd of women and children, and Benoni was entirely in the hands of the strikers.

Friday, the 10th, was a day of continued fighting in Johannesburg. The strikers captured Newlands, and their sphere of influence extended north to the Robinson Mine.

Thirty police were captured. Two aeroplanes were brought down. The workers' hall at Benoni was completely destroyed by an aeroplane bomb. Martial law was proclaimed in Benoni, Bethal, Boksburg, Germiston, Heidelberg, Johannesburg, Klerksdorp, Krugersdorp, Middleburg, Potchefstroom, Pretoria, Roodepoort, Maraisburg, Springs and Standerton. The Durban Light Infantry were called out that same day, as well as two battalions of the Railway and Harbours Brigade, and twenty-six commandos or civilian "burghers." A general strike was declared in Durban. The casualty list that day in Johannesburg alone were nineteen police and thirteen civilians killed, and eighteen police and twenty-nine civilians wounded. A further seventy-six came into the town hospital from the outskirts. There was no news from the East Rand, where the sound of artillery fire had been persistent.

On the 12th, General Smuts arrived in Johannesburg by car, having been fired at on the way.

Between Doornfontein and Troyeville the Imperial Light Horse were taken by surprise whilst cleaning their kits, and had twenty casualties before they could come into action and drive back the strikers. The latter's casualties in this affray were seventy-nine.

The Transvaal Scottish in the fighting that day at Benoni lost four killed and twenty wounded. The battalion was caught in an ambush. The remaining casualties for the day were two killed, one died of wounds and two wounded of the military, and four killed and fourteen wounded of the police, with three missing. Of civilians two killed and seven wounded.

By this time Johannesburg was entirely surrounded by strikers' commandos.

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On Monday, the 13th, there was a change. General van Deventer, who had been put in charge of the troops, captured Benoni and Brankpan from the strikers, and the besieged D.L.I. in Briston were relieved by aeroplanes dropping ammunition and food on the ridge.

The official casualty list for the day, of Government forces only, were seven killed and thirty-three wounded, also six of the previous wounded list were reported as having died since.

On Tuesday, the 14th, Government troops drove the strikers out of Fordsburg after an artillery bombardment of seventy minutes. That night, Fisher, a young Communist and the real live-spark of the movement, was killed in the Trades Hall at Fordsburg, though many people assert he committed suicide—and this was later accepted officially.

The next casualty list showed five killed and four previously reported wounded dying of wounds, a hundred and seven wounded and two missing.

Six thousand prisoners were taken by the Government forces by March 15th, and that day was spent in clearing up the isolated strikers with tanks and infantry. That day showed, of Government forces, one killed, two died of wounds and fifty-one wounded.

The list for the 17th was eight killed, three died of wounds and ninety-three wounded (including a private, Austen Chamberlain), and twenty-eight civilians wounded. It was estimated that the strikers had had two hundred killed and five hundred wounded during the fighting period.

Percy Fisher, who had presided over the Council of Five, as the headquarters direction of the militant strike was

called, tried to keep things going to the bitter end, and when some of his followers wished to hoist the white flag he set on them himself with a sjambok. When the cause seemed hopeless he led the fighting in Market Buildings till his men broke, when he walked quietly to the Trades Hall and blew out his brains.

That was the last of the rebellion that had cost the strikers two hundred killed and five hundred wounded, the Government forces about sixty killed and three hundred and fifty wounded, and many civilians and natives both killed and wounded.

The worst feature of the whole affair were the atrocities committed on captured police, natives and civilians. In many cases they were handed over to the women, who committed the most painful and intimate atrocities on them—several being thereby rendered impotent for life.

That this rebellion had been long planned, and that it had been encouraged by Moscow for a year or more past, is generally accepted—I myself had been told of the intention by Bolsheviks in Erivan as early as 1920. The news of this intention, moreover, was communicated to the South African Government by Scotland Yard some months before the outbreak. During my interview with General Smuts, I asked him particularly of what race the women were who had committed these sexual atrocities on the police. I well remember his answer: "They were your countrywomen and mine."

I was not particularly surprised at this, as I had already seen what blood lust can do for people when once the game starts.

It was a serious rebellion, and was started in a firm



belief that the Nationalist movement would support it when once the fighting began. This, however, did not happen, and many strikers who were on the look-out for Boer commandos, which they had been told were coming to their aid, were surprised at being captured by these very commandos, who had come to Johannesburg to help the Government.

As in the days of Kruger and Botha, the Dutch farmers from the veldt answered the call that came from "Oom Jan," which was a great surprise, not only to the strikers but to several members of General Smuts' own political party.

Rather than go by train from Capetown to Durban I continued in the same ship round the Cape, touching at East London, where we were taken off in a "basket" owing to the rough sea, and Port Elizabeth, where there was an agricultural show in progress. There I had my first glimpse of ostriches and went round the plume exhibit, which was worth many thousands of pounds. The weather was very warm as it was full summer, and the view of the east coast with its innumerable rivers opening out into the sea as we crept up the coast, was just the kind of country that would have suited me at that time for permanent settlement. W.L.J. (the American Consul) was an expert on the guitar, and as he had a very pleasant baritone voice we passed the evenings listening to his rendering of Portuguese *fardoes*, which are surely the most lovely of folk-songs.

At Capetown we had landed the sweepstakers and quoit-men, and so our journey was peaceful in the extreme. I could place my deck-chair where I wished and could read undisturbed. Apart from an ear-splitting, old-fashioned

habit of blowing bugles for meals, the boat was quite comfortable now that the crowd had diminished.

In the second class were one or two Boer farmers who were moving up to Eldoret in Kenya. They were keen Nationalists and disliked the British intensely.

Arrived at Durban, W.L.J. and I stayed at the Marine Hotel—not before I had been frightened out of my life by my first ride in a “rickshaw.” To sit in this flimsy conveyance and be rushed along the street by a six-foot Zulu covered with horns and feathers, very often, on downward slopes, his feet being entirely off the ground for several yards, is disturbing till you are used to it. I leant forward so far that I almost fell on the man’s neck. It was several days later before I had confidence enough to sit well back and cross my legs.

I visited the offices of the *Natal Mercury* in Durban, and they printed an interview with me about Russia and Turkey. At the Marine Hotel I made my first acquaintance with avocado pears, mealy cobs roasted and buttered, and mangoes; and as they all need skill to eat I found an interest in meals which I had never previously experienced. Outside the hotel stands a very striking statue of Dick King, the settler who rode from Grahamstown to Durban with the news of the first Boer revolt. It depicts a tired horse barely able to lift its legs, and on its back the crumpled figure of a bearded and travel-stained farmer. As a statue it is intensely alive.

I was lunching one day in the hotel when I met an old comrade of Bushey days, Lewis Reynolds, now a member of the Union Parliament and a follower of General Smuts, whose secretary he became before his entry into the House. I had known him very well at Bushey, and was very pleased

to see him. He invited W.L.J. and myself to stay with him at his father's house some miles down the coast, and we gladly accepted.

A day or two later W.L.J. and I left Durban by train for Esperanza. A very long journey owing to frequent stopping. It was more like an excursion on a scenic railway at the White City than a real train journey, as the rises and falls seemed to be quite considerable. At Esperanza we were met by L.F.R. in a car and driven to his house. The house stood overlooking the sea, backed by miles of sugar plantation, of which industry in Natal Sir Frank Reynolds was one of the pioneers.

The service in the house was carried out by Indians, and the work in the gardens and on the estate by Zulus. Sir Frank was a fluent Zulu speaker, and seemed to hold a very popular position in the esteem of these people. To watch the old man (he was over seventy) talking that strange language of clicks, clacks and chokes was an amusing sight, for his sense of humour was very great, and there was none of that colour coldness between him and his men that I was to find in Kenya; in fact, according to the lights of most English settlers, his intimacy with them would lose him their respect. But this was far from the case. He had been bred amongst them, and he knew the language better than many of them—two very important factors when dealing with coloured people.

The bathing on the private beach was meant for surf-riders; but poor horseman that I am, I can ride a horse better than I can a plank of wood on an Indian Ocean roller. The sport has often been described, and it is a "sport" as described, but in action it is often different.

I was given a thing like a thin ironing board made of

wood, and told to wade out till the water came up to my chest. This was easy. I then had to turn round and choose a nice-looking wave. As it came towards me at an incredible speed I was to throw myself and the board—and that is the difficulty—on to its back, whereupon without more ado it should land me on the sandy beach. In no circumstances was I to grip the board with my hands, as my knuckles would have all the skin rubbed off them by the beach. That all seemed simple enough, and L.F.R. showed me how easy it was. Then it was my turn. I chose my wave—quite the best-looking in the sea at that time—turned round and waited; turned back again because the wave had not arrived and could find no wave at all. It had all got muddled up with the others. L.F.R. shouted to me not to turn round so much, so I tried again. I stood sideways so as not to miss the thing again, and the moment my chosen wave arrived I leapt on its back with the board. Well, the board was not used to my way so it stood up on end and hit me on the head. I seized it firmly to lay it flat, when it drove itself between my legs and made off on its own for the beach. I, meanwhile, covered with confusion, bruises and water, was doing my best to look composed after having turned a couple of somersaults in the raging surf. I did not try with a board again; besides, L.F.R. said that experts do not use them.

It was a paradise of a place, and I long to return. My hosts were kindness itself. We left after a few days for Durban, and caught an English boat for Mombasa. We both nearly died of starvation on the boat, as the food was quite uneatable. The crew were Goanese and it was the most uncomfortable boat I had ever been in. We landed at Lorenzo Marques, Beira and Mozambique. At either

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Beira or Mozambique—I forget which—we bathed in the warmest water I have ever bathed in. We also landed at Dar es salam and Zanzibar, and finally entered Kilindini harbour and landed at Mombasa in time to hear of riots in Nairobi.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE Nairobi riot of 1922 was a short-lived affair, caused by a general dissatisfaction with the Hut and Poll Tax and the enforced carrying of the "Kipande" or native passport. It resulted in the arrest of the ring-leader, Harry Thuku. For some time after this the Native Commissioners of the Colony held a series of *barazas* or meetings with the different tribes, where speeches were made of this sort:

"The change from Protectorate to Colony had nothing to do with higher taxes and lower wages. Higher taxes were due to the expenses of the war, which everyone had to share, and lower wages were due to the war because employers got less for their produce and so could not afford to pay as good wages as before. If wages had not been reduced many employers would have been unable to carry on their business, and some natives would have been unable to earn any wages at all. The only effect of the change from Protectorate to Colony was that before, the natives of this country were foreign people ruled over by the British King, now they were British subjects just as all Europeans."<sup>1</sup>

With this interesting expression of orthodox economics and hollow imperialism, the natives of Kenya were forced to be content. Another interesting "pronouncement" of this period was the following, which referred to the new laws for driving the natives farther into the reserves and acquiring their land for white settlers:

<sup>1</sup> From a governmental periodical.

"As regards title deed, the issue of such would be contrary to native law and custom. The best title deed that the Kavirondo could have was a description of the boundaries of each native reserve published in the *Official Gazette*: this would be a permanent record and would stand for all time."

I consider the above a gem of its kind, and it makes me thankful the natives did not know too much British history. One last notice which has its humours refers to medals.

"Well, at the end of the war, His Majesty the King was so pleased with the way in which his African subjects"—this rather clashes with the Protectorate-Colony business—"had helped him to fight his enemy that he decided to bestow some signal mark of honour on their principal chiefs, so he ordered a number of medals to be made of two kinds, one kind of silver gilt, which is like gold, and one kind of silver. These medals have on one side a picture of the King, and on the other a picture of a war-ship and a merchant ship, and are worn round the neck by a chain. The award of the silver medal is a high honour; that of the silver gilt medal a very high honour."

The greater trouble in Kenya in 1922 was, and still is, the Indian question, which is briefly whether the Indians, who in Kenya are the merchant and foreman class, should be allowed to live in the European area, should they so desire, and have equal franchise with the white settlers. This question, still unsettled, was much to the fore in 1922, and tempers were heated on both sides.

Now Kenya, being high in altitude, has one extraordinary effect upon British settlers; it produces a form of insanity—"Kenya madness"—which prevents those who

suffer thus from being able to discuss either the native or the Indian question without becoming hysterical. This trouble has been the main cause of the lack of agreement in the difficulty. On the other hand, the Indians were so suspicious of the white settlers that they would scarcely believe a word they said. The only possible way to terminate discussions in these circumstances was for both Indians and English to agree that the primary interest of the country was that of the natives. This got both sides out of a hole and, thus, the discussions would terminate. The Kemalist regime in Turkey had had its effect on the Moslem Indians, and nearly every little Moslem shop had pictures of Kemal hung in window or on wall.

The Indians were very kind to me both in Mombasa and Nairobi, though rather frightened of the newspaper I represented. I am afraid that they still consider the anti-Indian articles that followed my return to England to have been written by me, but that was not so.

I stayed three or four days in Mombasa and then went on to Nairobi, where I put up at the New Stanley. My first night there gave me an inkling of one of the main insect pests which abound. It had been raining, and, as soon as the lights were put on in the hotel, through every hole in the building strange insects about the size of flies crawled inside and began to fly around the ceiling in thick clusters. After some minutes of these acrobatics their wings would drop off, and they would fall to the ground in showers and walk about till they were crushed underfoot. They were some species of flying ant, but apparently quite harmless.

The settlers were all in a state of great depression as a result of the stabilization of the rupee at 2s., which had



taken place on March 15th, 1920. This, of course, was to have, and is still having, disastrous results. Its immediate result was that all debts were increased by fifty per cent., much to the joy of the bankers who originated deflation, and to the agony of the settlers, many of whom had overdrafts at the banks.

There was also dissatisfaction owing to the land offered for use by the Government for ex-service settlers; several of these properties were situated in rocky, virgin land, devoid of any water supply and without means of access by vehicle.

Bankruptcies were common, and for this there was more than one reason. Many of the post-war settlers came out to Kenya with an entirely wrong idea of starting to work. These settlers would buy their land and then commence to build a comfortable house, stock it with furniture brought from home or bought in Nairobi, lay down a good cellar, ask all neighbours in for "sun-downers," and be surprised that at the end of the year they had no money for the development of their own *shambas*. After struggling along for two or three years they would abandon the job, and sell to cut their losses. Those that succeeded were the ones who had no thought of comfort till their profits enabled them to exchange their grass hut for a wooden or stone house.

I stayed for several days with the Town Clerk of Nairobi, and learnt much of the administration from him. After a fortnight in Nairobi, during which time I had a bout of malaria, I decided to go and see some of the country.

W.L.J. and I left by car for Nakuru to see the salt lakes and the annual horse-races that take place there.

The road passed through most glorious country, and at night the glare of our headlights would show zebra or wart-hogs or buck. We stayed a night in a dak-bungalow, and continued our journey the next day. An invitation to stay with Mr. Byatt, brother of the then Governor of Tanganyika, enabled us to enjoy Nakuru and its races to the full. After a few days we returned to Nairobi, and then again I set out west to stay at Molo with Mr. Powys-Cobb, one of the earliest settlers.

All the trains in Kenya were wood-stoked, and the carriages were marked "Europeans only" or "Asiatics only." The thing that puzzles me most is that Jews are counted as Europeans even if they come from Peking. It is one of the idiosyncrasies that make this colour bar so difficult to understand in English dependencies. After having travelled many miles with Arabs in French trains, trams and 'buses, I found this segregation business rather trying, since my object was to learn the Indian point of view. The way in which the red dust of Kenya penetrated into that train was amazing. In spite of the fact that the windows were shut and fine wire was placed across them in the shape of a shutter, the red dust would find its way into the valise, hand-bag or box that lay on the rack. My hair and skin were covered, and it was several days before the last vestige left my scalp. Hills of blue in the distance, herds of animals like little specks, trees and space, green, yellow and red colours and tones—strange-looking trees, large bushes, boulders, ravines, colour again, birds—and all so still and quiet and vast. . . . So entirely different from Algeria; so untropical—and yet the Equator runs through Kenya. The altitude explains this. Mombasa, by the coast, is hot and damp and feverish. Up here, still

climbing, it is warm and dry and fresh. No meals on the train, but punctually at meal-times the train halts, and in a dak-bungalow on the station platform is an excellent meal, and for breakfast we eat wearing the pyjamas that we wore at night. Kenya has no time for too many conventions, thank God, and here people do not stare if you wear seasonable clothes. There was a freedom about the place in 1922 which I hear is fast disappearing with the advent of laundries that can starch shirts for evening wear.

When I arrived at Molo it was late in the evening and the rain was falling steadily. After much looking around I discovered a buggy driven by a native, and this, he told me, belonged to Powys-Cobb. I wished to start at once—the native to stay the night, since the darkness was coming on and we had several miles to go. Anyway, finally we started, and in the rain and darkness we trundled along. At first there was a road, climbing a hill-side, then a track, and finally with a lurch we proceeded the rest of the way over what appeared to be hedges, ditches and ploughed fields, but which was, in truth, but open virgin country cut by the track we were to follow. Above the hiss of the falling rain there would come the roar of a lion in the distance, and the mules would hurry perceptibly faster. I wondered what I should do if the sound came nearer, but as my driver did not seem to mind, I was quieted. The journey seemed endless, and when the faint light from Keringet reached our eyes I was grateful.

Keringet was a wonderful house. Built in one storey of massive blocks of grey stone, it is surmounted by a second storey of cedar-wood, cut from the cedar forest

near by. The main living-room is like an old Welsh castle, and the upstairs rooms smell sweetly and healthily of the cedar from which they are built.

I spent several happy days there, and rode over the surrounding country which, apart from the trees, monkeys and shrubs, was not unlike parts of Surrey and Sussex.

Powys-Cobb had the remnants of his famous pack of lion-hounds still with him, and lovely dogs these were, though not very obedient when we took them out on horseback. In the evenings I gathered my notes and wrote my articles for the *Morning Post*. These were not a success, and when I came to the Indian question and was not one-sided enough, no more were published. I am afraid I was rather a loss to the paper, but I am eternally grateful to them for giving me an opportunity of seeing something of the African continent and meeting good friends for the future. I also started a novel, which was published in 1924.

After several days I moved on to stay with a settler in Koru, for whom I had had a letter of introduction from Harold Nicolson. Koru is a little station between Molo and the lake, Victoria Nyanza, and here I was met by C.A. We rode to his *shamba* on mules, riding through most beautiful country till the lake itself came into view behind two conical hills at the far end of the Kisumu plain.

A wooden house covered with bougainvillea; a garden rambling with morning-glory; a patch of green carpeted with marigolds. The purple petals, the pale blue trumpets, the orange flowers in a riot of colour that neither appeared too violent in contrast nor rude in appearance, since the shimmering heat blends colour without offence. It was

here that we took many rides together and watched the cardinal bird on the maize stalks, and learnt that native babies when very newly born are dark salmon-coloured and not black, and that the *safari* ant is a most entertaining animal to watch. Here, too, I had my first experience with a snake, and the dreadful encounter was as follows. One early morning as I was proceeding through the little garden to the coffee *shamba* my eyes lit suddenly upon a long, dark green snake which lay along the path whereon I was to travel, its head nestling in grass and its tail behind a shrub. "Death," I thought, "stands before me once more!" I ran hastily back to the house, seized a shot-gun, and returned to the snake which, although quite still in the morning heat, was undoubtedly watching me. I fired—there was a wriggle and all was still. I approached warily, and, sure enough, one end of him was blown to pieces. I examined the monster and was proud of his length. With a stick I extended him full length on the path, and he was quite five feet long; but on the end of him that should have been tail he had a head that had been beaten in by sticks, whilst I, the modern Tartarin, had blown his real tail to pieces. There were no natives near at the time . . . and C.A. was very sympathetic.

Some little distance from the *shamba* was discovered a veritable Vale of Avalon—a cup hollowed from the hills filled with dark green tropical plants, through the centre of which ran a little stream. It but needed a white marble sarcophagus to be the perfect resting-place of any Arthur who should die by a Mordred's spear.

But of all Koru's lovely views and undisturbed Avalons there was nothing more glorious than the sight of the sun as it sank behind the great lake and washed its waters with

gold. Towards the lake at this time would creep shadows from an escarpment that ran towards its northern side, and every few steps the shadows took they would turn and gather other shades unto themselves and move on—glacier-like, ever changing colour and shade—and creep into the very water, pulling the sheet of gold over their heads for peace.

Koru was also blessed by the settlers who lived around and about. They were a happy and friendly lot, and hard-working as settlers go. My stay there was all too short, and soon I was on the train again, going east to Lumbwa, where I was to stay with a friend who was running a private school for the children of settlers. At Lumbwa station there was no one to meet me; so, leaving my luggage, I started to walk in a direction indicated to me by the station-master. After a mile or two I called at a settler's house and, borrowing a guide and a horse, finally found the school.

The country through which I had had to pass was flatter than Koru. There were fields of maize and lucerne, for all the world like a patchwork quilt, and a small stream or two and a little mill. On the near skyline a native would stand, stark naked, leaning on his long stick, one foot resting on the knee of his supporting leg—statue-like—watching space, or thinking . . . or not thinking. The soil looked very fertile, and I thought how comparatively simple it would be to gather a living for oneself and family and lead a happy, contented life. Nobody, however, in Kenya appears to desire this. They want profit to add to profit, so that they can afford to send their sons to Eton, and finally to leave Africa and end their days in Bournemouth or Torquay. In this the English settler in Kenya

is like the French settler in Algeria—the Colony is but a place in which to make money to be expended on returning to that very existence which had driven so many away through boredom or futility in the days of their youth. The Englishman is rarely a settler; he is but a sojourner.

The school stood on a slight slope, backed by a large and overgrown forest in which buck and many sorts of monkeys formed the chief animal life. As at Koru, lions and leopards were occasional visitors only. It consisted of a substantially sized house and a separate building containing one large room and two dormitories. There were two masters besides my friend the headmaster, and about twenty-five boys.

I intended to write more articles here and continue the novel, but as that did not take all my time I taught French, geography, elementary Latin and history, and was again fascinated by the child mind.

The boys were different in many ways from those of my early schooldays, being kinder and more thoughtful. Most of them spoke Swahili fluently, and showed no arrogant superiority towards the native servants. We played cricket and football and took long walks on Sundays. Riding lessons were also taken by certain boys, and one day a boy of ten, being thrown, broke his arm. This was a serious matter, and it was twenty-four hours before a doctor could reach the place. The boy was in great pain, and it was little enough one could do until the arm was properly set.

As a schoolmaster, I determined to be an impartial one—one not given to favour some boys rather than others, as I had suffered myself in the past from ushers who were less scrupulous. In this, however, I found the greatest

difficulty, and in order to repair wrongs I must have seemed most changeable to the intuitive mind of the youthful male animal.

Time went on, and I had to be wending my way back to Nairobi and England, and it was with real regret that I parted from my young charges. I think I must have been a fairly popular master, for on saying good-bye one boy was moved to tears, and another gave me the choice, as a farewell present, of a broken camera, a nickel watch-chain, and a catapult. After much persuasion I accepted the nickel watch-chain, and this I treasure to this day.

Alas, the school was to fall on bad days, and now it no longer exists. It should have been a little gold-mine, but Fate willed otherwise.

I returned to Nairobi and visited several neighbouring *shambas*. A week or two later I left for the coast and took a French boat to Marseilles. There were many native troops from Madagascar on board, and before we had reached our destination we had been forced to confide six of them to the waves and the hungry fish—the change of climate and the voyage proving too much for those who had never before left their native land.

We stopped at Djibouti, in French Somaliland, which is surely the hottest place in the world, and then at Port Sudan. The Red Sea in August was like a furnace, and for ease at night, rather than sleep on deck, I slept in a bath half covered with water. This process is all right if you do not move, but the sudden shock of water on a dry patch of skin caused by movement of any kind is a certain awakener. There were only five or six English people on board, the rest being French and Italian. At Marseilles I visited the French Colonial Exhibition, which was



magnificently arranged, and three days later left for England.

Kenya has its troubles before it. What the outcome will be no one can definitely say. The Indian question will sooner or later have to be settled, and the constant driving back of the natives into smaller and smaller reserves cannot go on indefinitely unless we are determined to drive them all from their own land.

Any suggestions that Indians or natives should be given other than treatment inferior to that received by the white settlers is met by the latter with threats of armed resistance and desire for complete independence with themselves as rulers. I do not think the threats need be taken very seriously, for if it came to fighting, the white settlers would be so disintegrated by the quarrels of the many ex-generals, admirals and colonels as to who should command that their success would be severely endangered.

If India is to have an outlet for her surplus population, what more obvious than Tanganyika, Kenya and Uganda; and I see no reason why the two races should not live on peaceful terms as do the medley of races under French rule. That there are faults on both sides cannot be disputed, but a little less superiority on the part of the whites and a little less inferiority on the part of the Indians would go a long way towards a peaceful solution.

I am not a believer in the missionary conception of civilization by clothing, and I cannot see why a bowler hat on a native man's head should bring him nearer God than a postage-stamp on the same man's navel—and I have seen both.

Nevertheless, sensible education for the natives was, and is still, very backward, but if the settler would look farther

ahead he would not object so much to being taxed to provide natives with this education.

Intolerance is part of the "Kenya madness" already referred to, and this makes things more difficult than ever if a solution is to be found.

The new generation of white settlers that is growing up—the first to be born and bred in the country—will probably be more successful, since their prejudices will have been toned down by the time they take over the reins of colonial government.

A glorious country with a glorious future. Let us hope no short-sighted policy will ruin its prospects.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

BACK, then, in England once more, and with nothing in view but to continue the novel I had started at Molo. My health was gradually improving, but I knew it would still take time to repair the nervous waste of the Russian and Turkish days. I therefore settled down at Astley and lived in extreme peace with music and pen to comfort me, and the conversation of land workers as relaxation. I did much walking, and found beauty in unexpected places and glories from the summits of the Worcestershire hills. I became a Forester and an Oddfellow, and even began Masonry, but soon gave up the latter owing to its local bourgeois outlook and starched-shirt hypocrisy. I also became a Buffalo and had many a happy night in lodge.

That autumn of 1922 was mild and bright, and as much time as possible did I pass out of doors and in woods. Here a new life opened for me. The trees ceased to be dead things, with the grass a carpet, or the insects and wild animals but curiosities worthy of little notice. Suddenly, as if a curtain had lifted, the trees lived and were friendly, the grass became grasses of infinite variety, and the insects and animals were leading lives of danger and sorrow, joy and industry.

I would lie on a woodland track, scarred deeply by the marks of wagon wheels, and watch the great *safari* of a large and energetic beetle from one side of the track to

the other—and what a journey it would be. Up hills and into valleys, skirting great lakes that were but saucers of rain water in the mud, finally faced by the great escarpment that marked the outer edge of the wheel rut itself. Again and again the mountaineer would try to reach the summit, only to be forcibly hurled back by an avalanche of mud—the lava that had been thrown up by the avalanche of giant wheels. At last he was on top, and a great canyon would loom before him. Dauntlessly he descended, and to him it must have been as frightening as any descent of man—such as down the hill-side into the Cheddar Gorge.

I had studied the ways of fleas and lice during my prison days, but here were different habits and different lives. The louse will carry her eggs wherever she moves, other insects will bury them or even forget their existence the moment they are laid.

But of all animals that frequent our woods is not the badger the bravest and the fox the most intelligent?

I was once told the following story by a shepherd on the South Downs, and readers can either believe it or not.

One moonlight night when the sheep were penned in, a fox cautiously approached and began to walk slowly round the pen. The watching shepherd, whose dog that very morning had been taken ill, hurried forward to scare away the enemy, but he was soon far too interested to do anything but watch, for the fox was acting in the strangest manner. Wherever the fat back of a sheep pressed itself against the hurdles, the fox would merely pull off a piece of wool and then go on to the next until he had a large lump in his mouth. He then turned and trotted slowly off to a neighbouring dew-pond. The shepherd followed and watched. After circling the pond once or twice the

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fox turned and began to walk backwards into the water. Back and back he stepped, slowly but unhesitatingly, until no part of him but his head appeared above the water. He still continued until only his nose and mouth were above, with the lump of wool still firmly held in his jaws. Suddenly he let go of the wool, turned round and came out of the water. He shook himself twice and ran off to his home. Then the shepherd perceived in the moonlight that the white wool had become black. He pulled it to the water's edge with the end of his crook and was amazed to find it one mass of fleas.

As a method of ridding one's body of these pests the fox's action is hard to beat.

W.C.M. had a farm the other side of Worcester, and I went to stay with him for a few days. The length of the visit was cut short by a difference of opinion, and I walked out of the house. When I returned to Astley I realized that my nerves were not improving as they should, since the argument that had caused the trouble was so trivial that only intolerance born of the nervous system of both of us could have been the reason for such stupidity.

W.C.M. was obviously still suffering from the effects of war and I from the effects of prison. I stayed with him again a few years later, after he had married, and we laughed much over our past follies.

Realizing I needed change, I took advantage of an offer to appear in "The Marriage of Columbine" by Harold Chapin, which the Strolling Plays were producing, and went to London for rehearsals. I enjoyed this immensely, as I do anything connected with the stage, and the play was a success.

On returning to the country I discovered amongst some

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old papers a poem that C. S. Calverley had written to my mother's uncle, who had been captain of the boats at his college at Cambridge. It appears that Calverley had been asked to row for the college, since after one or two outings with the trial crew he was considered a most promising oar. When the next day for crew practice came along Calverley did not put in an appearance, but sent my great-uncle the following incomparable poem instead:

I was rowing down the river when the moon was rising high  
And bargees' forms rose mistily against the leaden sky;  
And I thought of vanished hours and of friends who are no more,  
And then I found my bottom—it was feeling very sore.  
And is it thus, I murmured, that my life must pass away,  
And must I toil and sweat and bleed throughout the livelong day,  
And must I fight the battles of existence yet to come  
With blister-covered hands and excoriated bum?  
Let freshmen think it exercise to labour at the oar.  
Let coxwains bawl till they are hoarse: "Now, six" and "Blast  
you, four!"  
Such exercises no more I'll take, and as for coxswains—rot 'em  
Before again I injure thee, my beautiful—my bottom.

The tragedy is that the original is lost and there is only a copy in my great-uncle's handwriting.

In 1922 my mind was not directing itself particularly in a political direction, since the attitude of the Coalition after the war had destroyed my faith in the political system; nevertheless I found myself beginning to read history and study books on economic questions. The more history I read, the more I wanted to read, and the more amazed I became.

The British Empire, I soon discovered, had not been founded on liberty and President Wilson's fourteen points. This was a great shock, and when I realized that the

industrial revolution had been accompanied by inconceivable cruelties, I read any book I could find that dealt with that period.

Two particular passages interested me profoundly. These were as follows :

From Gisborne's "Enquiries into the Duties of Man," 1795, Vol. II: "Not many years ago an agreement had been made between a London parish and a Lancashire manufacturer, by which it was stipulated that with every twenty sound children one idiot should be taken."

So this is how child-labour was recruited, thought I. Now we begin to see how to become rich.

From P. J. Dunning I read: "A certain ten per cent. will ensure its capital employment anywhere; twenty per cent. certain will produce eagerness; fifty per cent. positive audacity; a hundred per cent. will make it ready to trample on all human laws; three hundred per cent. and there is not a crime at which it will scruple, nor a risk it will not run, even to the chance of its owner being hanged."

This was something of which I had no idea. This money business interested me. I found Henry George's "Progress and Poverty," and thence went on to Marx's "Capital."

It was incredible, so I took up Hugh Cecil's "Conservatism" to see what he said about things, but I felt as I came to the end that that sort of thing—money and wage conditions—scarcely existed in his creed.

Books on Tariff Reform and Free Trade I read alternatively, and they seemed also to be out of the picture—they offered neither excuse for the past nor certainty for the future.

Disraeli's novels—here was something I could appreciate.

He apparently thought of class as I did, and yet he was a Tory. I read his life and then I understood—he was an Oriental, of course.

Then I would find myself pondering over it all, and my eyes caught the words "News from Nowhere." I had read of this in some cheap paper once. It was by William Morris, and I knew he had been a friend of my Aunt Georgie. I took it down and read. Here was something for me. Here was the sort of life I should like; and what about the hundreds of people in factory towns—would they not like it too?

After "News from Nowhere" I read Morris's life by my cousin, J. W. Mackail, and I thought it then, as I think it now, a beautiful and a kindly life that he led.

I lingered on a speech he had made over the grave of young Linnell, who had been killed in the Trafalgar Square riots of 1887.

"Our friend who lies here has had a hard life, and met with a hard death; and if society had been differently constituted his life might have been a delightful, a beautiful and happy one. It is our business to begin to organize for the purpose of seeing that such things shall not happen; to try and make this earth a beautiful and happy place."

Yes, there was something wrong with society, I could see that; but it was not my business—at least not then.

Thus William Morris began his subtle influence on me, and for a whole year, unbeknown to me, his past coloured my present. He, who never believed in the power of the political machine to achieve his Socialism, must look from Valhalla with a smile or sympathetic sadness on those of us



who believed till recently in the impotency of bourgeois outlooks to affect the Socialist mind.

But what to do? What outlet for an energetic mind? Over this problem I was to ponder long.

I would have liked to have been a surgeon or a doctor with time for research in psychology—that neglected subject so little studied by the British Medical Profession. I would have liked to have studied insanity and the effect of colour on the mind—to trace inherited manias right down to their chemical source. To study biology and work in a laboratory—but it would take six years to qualify for medicine, and my memory for examination would need very hard work on it before I even began to acquire fresh knowledge. To be a monk and retire into seclusion from the world and its ways—to live half in, half out of the world. But that, I felt, would be an easy way out and a denial of destiny somehow.

Soldiering, war, travel, the lonely spaces, exploring. Yes, exploring called me, but I could not stand it yet a while; except the open spaces and the sun.

Business, office work—no, the thought was intolerable. Politics—which side? How could I be a Tory when once I had seen a possibility of a different state of society?

No, the thing to do was to wait; and whilst I waited a message came from Paris. Could I go and join the Armenian Delegation that was bound for Lausanne, to take part in the forthcoming conference that was to decide outstanding matters between England and Turkey? I agreed to do this. The events that led up to the Lausanne treaty, culminating in the Chanak affair, had an important effect on our domestic politics in England.

On the 17th of September Mustapha Kemal's troops were drawn up on the southern shore of the Bosphorus, and the British troops were sent from Constantinople to prevent their crossing into Europe. On the 26th, Constantine of Greece, a beaten and disappointed man, abdicated in favour of his son Alexander. In October, as a result of the fear of war in Turkey and other more important reasons about which I cannot yet write, the Coalition Government fell and Bonar Law became Prime Minister on the 19th, with my father as Chancellor of the Exchequer. The full story of the intrigues, causes and results that led to the change of Government I may tell in a later book, but at the moment my pen must necessarily be still.

On the 20th of November the Lausanne Conference opened. Whilst I awaited the time for my departure for Lausanne I did a certain amount of quice (wood-pigeon) shooting and rabbiting.

Now quice shooting needs infinite patience and great quiet if you wish success, and the pitting of these qualities against the speed and acute vision of the birds afforded me great interest. One evening when the darkness was coming on apace and I had become tired of waiting, I left the shelter of a small wood and made my way homeward, slightly annoyed at my lack of success. As I crossed a field belted by trees I heard a rush of wings and hurriedly fired both barrels at the flying bird that was only just distinguishable in the deepening twilight. The bird fell, heavily I thought, and I ran towards it. Thirty, twenty paces—yes, something was there. Ten paces and then, to my horror, I saw a large grey owl standing blinking at me. It seemed as if it were five foot high; it seemed as if it reproached me. I turned and ran. Once in the library my hand came in

contact with a book of short stories by Father Benson, and, settling down to read, I soon found myself immersed in the story of one who went out to shoot a bird in the dusk and that the bird he decided on for his prey was singing with great beauty and joy. He fired and there was immediate stillness. At his feet lay the dead songster, but on raising his eyes to the trees above he saw a face of evil, with down-cast eyes, grinning at the death of innocence.

And that man fled too.

This story, coupled with my own experience, has resulted in the fact that I have never shot a living creature since. It is unseemly to destroy beauty for pleasure; and I was amazed that I had never looked at the question in that way before.

Association with aged agricultural labourers who had never moved outside a radius of twenty miles, except by accident, was a source of delight—provided you could get them to tell some of the old Worcestershire stories. I remember being told the following tale of a certain well-known farmer who happened to notice three strange men and a long tape measure standing in one of his fields, where-upon the following conversation took place:

“Wot be yaow adoin’ in moi field?”

“We’ve come from post office to see about puttin’ up some telegraph poles in these ’ere fields of yourn.”

“There bain’t no poles nor nuthink else agoin’ up in moi field—and Oi’ve told yaow, moind.”

At this juncture the post office officials explained that they had written instructions, and should they show them to him?

“Oi can’t read,” shouts the farmer proudly.

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"Well," they reply as they move away, "we'll be comin' to put 'em up just naow."

"If so be as Oi lets yaow," mutters the farmer.

Three days later the farmer noticed a bright red cart in this same field carrying two fair-sized poles and being pushed by his former acquaintances. Saying nothing, he goes to the stall and lets out his prize bull into the very same field. The bull, seeing the red cart, starts off at a gallop, head down, snorting and hurling the mud from his hoofs into the air. With a look of horror the post office officials turn and run faster than they have ever run before.

"Woi don't yaow show the bull them instructions?" the farmer calls out at the top of his voice as he turns towards his house.

I remember well one day during cherry picking time in an orchard hearing a farmer call to his young son who was standing up among the branches hard at work filling his basket: "Moind 'ow yaow come down the ladder, Oi've took un away." Which, after all, explains the matter very clearly.

As a way of protesting against constant accusations as to the strangeness of a certain labourer's opinions and general way of life, the labourer will place his china mug on the table in the public bar with a bang and assert: "Oi am wot Oi am and carn't be no 'ammerer."

Many happy evenings among such folk did much to cheer my evenings.

However, it was time to be on the move again. Away with books and paper and pen, and into international politics for a change.

In 1921 I had been made a member of the Armenian Social Revolutionary Federation (Dashnakzutoun), and am

still the only non-Armenian member of this world-famous and once dreaded organization that was founded for the liberation of Armenia from Turkish and Russian domination. I appreciated it as a great honour, and thus in 1921 I had automatically become affiliated to the 2nd International, to which the British Labour Party is also affiliated.

To Lausanne the Armenian Delegation therefore went. It consisted of M. Khatissian, the former President of the Republic, Avetis Aharonian, former Prime Minister and national poet, and myself for the Dashnakzutoun, with Gabriel Effendi Nourangdounian, formerly Turkish Foreign Minister, and M. Paschalian for the National Party of Armenia. We went full of hope that the Allies would see justice done to the people who had suffered so much more in proportion than any other belligerent country for the sake of the Allied Powers.

We claimed a National Home for the Armenian race. We had been promised more than that before, but we were becoming disheartened.

The Dashnakzutoun stayed in a little hotel half-way up the hill by the funicular; the National Party close by.

The curtain was ready to go up on the final betrayal of Armenia.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE Conference took place at the Hôtel du Château (Ouchy), and the British Delegation consisted of Lord Curzon and Sir Horace Rumbold (with Harold Nicolson in close attendance on the former), and was quartered in the Beau Rivage. The Turkish Delegation was headed by Ismet Pasha. A Russian Delegation under Chicherine was also in Lausanne at this time. The Hôtel Beau Rivage was a rustling mass of reporters, ministers, secretaries and delegates from almost every country in the world. Every afternoon *thé dansants* were held, and a strange mixture of triviality and world importance in greater or lesser degree would wander in dance round the large rooms.

It soon became apparent that Turkey was the cock of the walk; and the respective hotels of the British and Turkish delegations reflected the atmosphere admirably—the former pompous and slightly indignant, the latter confident and polite. Taken as a whole, the Lausanne Conference of 1922 was exactly like a crowd of different breeds of chickens round the corn bin; all looking for pickings and all clucking at the tops of their voices.

The corridors of hotels and the streets of the town itself seethed with secret police and secret agents of many countries—bantams waiting for crumbs that were missed by the chickens.

The Swiss authorities lived in terror of the appalling consequences that might ensue if Chicherine were to be shot by one of the many Russian refugees that infested Geneva and Lausanne. But for all that it was an interesting place at this time and full of interesting folk.

Stanciev of Bulgaria, Mussolini, Briand, Ismet Pasha, Khatissian, Curzon and others; all assembled, at great expense, to treat with the Turks whom the Allies had apparently beaten five years before. Of all diplomatic jokes this was surely the greatest—the conqueror coming humbly to the conquered, and furthermore, making himself ridiculous by trying for a certain settlement and then waiting with one foot on the train for his conditions to be accepted by the conquered people, who had no intention of being treated like children. The conqueror left and lost the game.

At Lausanne I met again the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent, Percival Landon, who used to live near the Kiplings in the old days, and had accompanied Colonel Young-husband to Thibet on his famous expedition to the Dalai Lama.

He died a few years ago, much regretted, and much admired for his very wide knowledge of foreign politics. He was intrigued at my presence with the Armenians, and informed me that there was nothing the British Foreign Office disliked so much as Englishmen muddling themselves up with other countries or peoples. I agreed with him from past experience, and talked of the personal jealousy towards Colonel T. E. Lawrence felt by certain English officials who had worked in Egypt, and who continued to decry his exploits in order to draw attention to their very inferior selves.

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I also met for the first time the Rev. J. H. Harris, who was for some years Liberal member for Hackney, and is still the secretary of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society. He had a great sympathy for Armenia, and was full of ways and means of getting our case heard.

With him came William O'Moloney, who was connected with the League of Nations—ex-prisoner of Rulehben and an artist of considerable talent who, if he would only continue his passion for Islam and its historical portrayal on canvas, would assuredly leave his mark on modern art of what I might call the "incarnation school." He was one of those rare people who seemed to have an uncanny knowledge of the life and behaviour of a past race or generation, and was able to live in a world of his own just as if it were but a memory of what he, in another incarnation, had seen and experienced. The same uncanny knowledge is possessed by W. E. D. Allen, the (Tory) member for West Belfast, in his amazing understanding of the past history of Georgia and the Caucasus in general.

I also, in a more distant way, often feel a strange kinship with monastery life and the great unknown spaces in Algeria, Thibet and Brazil—and the last two countries I have never visited.

Some day, with the advance of psychological knowledge, we may understand the meaning of our affinities with places and peoples who do not surround us in our present world.

I met about this time a French officer of the 2nd Bureau, or Intelligence Service—Commandant Poidebard, a man of extreme intelligence and knowledge who had been attached to the British Forces in Mesopotamia, and had gone



to Baku with General Dunsterville's force in 1917. He had been with the French Mission in Tiflis, and left it with the general evacuation about the time I was first imprisoned in Turkey. A philosopher and student of history, full of charm and imagination; we had many a talk together, and I promised to meet him in Paris later on.

When, some time later in Paris, I sought his habitation, I found some difficulty in getting the bell answered. Finally I was ushered into a bare white room, where I waited some minutes. A strange asceticism hung over the house, and when shortly afterwards I was led to my friend's private room my amazement was shown on my face. In an equally austere room, with a giant crucifix on the wall, sat Commandant Poidebard, M.C., Legion d'Honneur and Croix de Guerre, behind a table piled with books, manuscripts and maps, smoking a large pipe; no longer attired in the familiar blue uniform, but in monk's robes—Father Poidebard, S.J., a Jesuit priest.

Another great character I met at Lausanne was the Rev. Kraft Bonnard, a Swiss Protestant pastor, whose enthusiasm for Armenia had led him to keep a small orphanage near Lausanne for the unfortunate orphans from that land. A man of unbounded enthusiasm and charm, he would rush round to see Chicherine, pleading for a National Home in Armenia for the scattered orphans, abuse him for being more concerned with oil than the lives of these children, and storm out of the room with the parting shot: "Nous nous fichons de vos puits de pétrole."

Madame Nalbandian, the Danish authoress, was also pleading for this National Home, interviewing Ismet and Chicherine, and writing innumerable articles for her country's newspapers. Although she was a Dane herself,

her husband had been an Armenian. With two little sons, aged six and four respectively, and a dying husband, Madame Nalbandian found herself in Constantinople in 1915 during the first of the Armenian war-deportations and massacres. Terrified for the safety of her husband and children, and unable to move the former owing to his illness, she managed to smuggle the children to the frontier and send them to relatives in Berlin, unattended and unknown, with tickets tied round their necks. After much delay and through the kindness of the German railway guards, they reached safety at last, and Madame Nalbandian felt freer to protect her husband. He died shortly afterwards, however, and eventually Madame Nalbandian rejoined her children in Berlin and crossed the frontier into Denmark.

On Sunday in Lausanne the friends of Armenia held a large meeting in the Protestant cathedral, and Avetis Aharonian, the Armenian poet, orator and novelist, was to be the principal speaker. The church was full, and a hush fell on the audience when this sad-faced patriot, worn by Siberian prisons, with black beard and long, wavy black hair, mounted the pulpit steps. For a few seconds his large soulful eyes wandered round the church, and he hesitated as if undecided what to say. Then he began. They thought, he said, that he had come to talk to them of the tragedies and sufferings of his people. They were wrong. He would not talk to them. They could not help. Here was the place to talk to God. He would speak to God, then.

The silence was unbroken. Aharonian raised his arms in entreaty and commenced what I can only describe as the most wonderful oration I have ever heard. The pathos of

his speech, the music of his voice, the play of his hands, were things never to be forgotten.

He told God of the early days of his people. How they had struggled to keep their faith when beset by enemies on all sides. How they had suffered by invasion; been decimated by massacre; persecuted for their political beliefs; and finally, after deportation, been betrayed by the great Christian powers.

For an hour he went on, and not an eye in the vast church left his face. His voice rose in crescendo. Would God hear him? Would God forgive him? Would God answer him? And why? . . . "*Parceque nous . . . nous sommes si petits et Toi . . . Toi, ô Dieu de mon peuple, es si grand. Frère aîné, aide nous. Père, réponds . . .*"

The church emptied in silence, but never have I seen an audience so impressed, so still, so humble.

During the whole of the Conference telegrams came pouring in from Syria telling of the deported Armenians who had arrived there from Turkey, half starving and penniless, and of the hundreds who had fallen by the way.

Day after day we tried to obtain an interview with the British Delegation to tell them, in the hopes that they could ask the Turks to cease the deportations. But to every request there was a refusal. Armenia had served her purpose. She had lost more of her population by siding with the Allies than Great Britain had done and—that was all that was needed.

There is a story that after refusing the last appeal for an interview, Lord Curzon burst into tears at the tragedy of it all; but when I heard of this I could not help feeling it was a bit late in the day.

Another man who was in Lausanne trying to get

justice for his people was General Agha Petros, the former commander-in-chief of the Assyro-Chaldeans. Agha Petros, who had been trained in a Russian military academy, had gained a great military reputation during the war by the way in which his army of mountaineers had beaten Turkish divisions and driven them north from Mosul. He had also been able to enfilade and hold back the Turks, thereby letting through General Dunsterville's force that came up the west of the Caspian Sea to Baku. In 1915 Petros had been promised independence for his country by the British, French and Russians, on condition he threw in his lot with the Allies instead of the Turks. This he did, and the result is that to-day he has been exiled by the British from his own country, denied repayment of money owed to him by the British Government, and had his own troops turned into so-called Iraq levies, officered by British officers, whose job it is to keep the oil-wells of Mosul safe from the Turks for their shareholders.

I did my best for Agha Petros at Lausanne, and translated into intelligible English some of his speech that he delivered to a sub-committee of the Conference. I did my best for him later with the Conservative Government, with no result, and we both waited till 1929 for justice to be granted him in his personal claim. But the Labour Government could not be bothered and said the matter had been looked into before, which I knew full well. But would *they* look into it? There was really no need. That was their decision, and thus it remains. It seemed to me incredible that a Labour Government could take that attitude, but I was soon to learn that other cases of injustice were to be treated in the same way.

After Agha Petros' speech at the Conference he wrote

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me the following letter, which I write as it was, without alteration.

"HÔTEL CENTRAL,

"December 26th, 1922.

"MY DEAR FRIEND, COL. OLIVER BALDWIN,—I am sure that God has helped me in my speak, they ask me to give them my spoke on paper for to marrow, I wish you can do it before Mr. Landon come to see me to marrow, he will come at 11 a.m.

"it might you can make three or four copy of it,

"I am

"your most sincerely

"PETROS."

It "mighted," and I sent him the copies.

I had an interview with Ismet myself, and was interested to find that nearly all his entourage were freemasons. I could not help being amused when I thought of the difference between the old Turkish lodges, where the Young Turks planned the overthrow of Abdul Hamid, and the English provincial ones. Ismet was as courteous as all Turks are, but quite adamant in his determination to drive every Armenian—and Greek, for that matter—out of Turkey. He suffered badly from deafness, which I realized must be very useful in diplomacy.

The Armenians of Lausanne and Geneva gave our delegation a dinner, and they were very kind to me, as they always are. After dinner and speeches there was much music, and Aharonian's patriotic verse was magnificently declaimed by a young doctor.

During the recitation of one poem Aharonian was

moved to tears. At the conclusion he asked the reciter the name of the author. He was amazed when it turned out to be himself. Aharonian had forgotten that thirty-five years ago he had written it in the Armenian paper that circulated in Constantinople before the war.

At that time I met Armen Karo, the hero of the greatest isolated revolutionary feat in history, and I learned from his own lips the story I shall tell in the next chapter. He still wore on his watch-chain a piece of one of the bombs that were thrown into the Ottoman Bank. He died a year or two later from consumption, a disease to which so many Armenians seem to succumb, however hale and hearty they may appear; and Karo was no exception, being a man of six foot two and broad in proportion.

For the rest of my stay in Lausanne I received from some Armenians in Geneva every week a box of an Armenian delicacy that is prepared by stringing walnuts on string and cooking them in a sweet and sticky jelly that is made from the white grape.

Gabriel Effendi Nourangdounian, the elderly Armenian who had once been Turkish Foreign Minister, was a fund of reminiscences. One afternoon we were sitting together at tea in the hotel dance-room when he leant over and said sadly:

"In this very room, in 1912, as the representative of a defeated Turkey I signed the Tripoli Treaty. To-day, as a representative of a defeated Armenia, I sit unknown and bowed with sorrow in this same room listening to music and watching people being happy. Then I was somebody although in defeat yet covered with medals. Now I am nobody . . . and still in defeat."

He told many tales of Abdul Hamid and the graft and

place-seeking that went on at the Sublime Porte. When Gabriel Effendi was first appointed to Cabinet rank he attended the receptions in the Imperial Palace that were held to celebrate certain feast days. On these occasions Abdul Hamid would present bags of gold to his ministers and others whom he especially favoured. When Gabriel Effendi was offered his share he refused, and only accepted it in the end when he realized that the Sultan was deeply offended. Abdul Hamid was apparently a charming conversationalist, though his high-pitched voice, behind which a trace of cunning was always discernible, left one with a strange feeling of artificiality and insincerity.

Stories of Talaat and Enver Pasha constantly flowed from Gabriel Effendi's lips, and it was apparent that the fall of the Ottoman Empire certainly meant the end of the intrigues, the tinsel splendour, and the wild orgies of oriental courts that were started by Haroun al-Raschid in Baghdad and had spread west to Algiers and back to Constantinople.

After a month and a half at Lausanne the delegates left, and the half-accomplished Treaty left Turkey where she was, geographically heightened her prestige, and enabled her to continue the deportation of Christians from Anatolia.

The war of 1915-18 against Turkey, it was now apparent, had had the following results. We had been badly defeated in the Dardanelles, but we had cleared Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and Arabia of Turkish sovereignty. We had taken a part of Macedonia away. We had seen over a million and a half Armenians massacred, starved and deported. We had encouraged the Greeks to have their army wiped out, and we thereby broke

the Greek monarchy. We refused to honour our pledge to the Assyro-Chaldeans, but we obtained control of the oil-wells of Mosul. We set up kings in Iraq, Trans-Jordania and the Hedjaz. We agreed to Italy having Adalia and Adana, which they soon gave back. The French received Cilicia and Syria, and we started a National Home for Jews in Palestine. We made peace with the Turk in Constantinople after the war, and allowed a new Turkey to grow up under our noses in Angora. We were so busy at the Versailles Conference that we forgot all about Turkey, and when it was obvious what had happened, we told the Armenians to attack them from the east and the Greeks from the west. Certain of our support, these two nations did so with disastrous consequences; and when, broken and ruined, Armenia claimed for her orphans a share of £10,000,000 that had been banked by Turkey in Germany, most of which had been stolen from Armenians, she was told the money had ceased to exist separately and had been taken over as reparation and paid out for one thing and another long ago.

To some it may now be clear why the phrase "Albion perfide" was coined, even if we still deny that we broke the Treaty we made with Napoleon at Amiens in 1802.

Disheartened and dispirited I returned to England.

The Lausanne Conference finally collapsed on February 4th with the refusal of the Turks to sign anything but a patched-up truce, which we were eventually forced to accept.

Events in English domestic politics were moving fast, and on May 19th Bonar Law resigned the Premiership owing to the illness that was to end in his death on



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October 30th. On May 22nd my father became Prime Minister, and the family prepared to move from No. 11 to No. 10 Downing Street. I had stayed myself, on and off, at No. 11, but I was destined never to stay at No. 10.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THIS, then, is the story of Armen Karo, told me in the lounge of our hotel that night.

In 1895 the continual massacres of Armenians in Turkey, carried out at the order of Abdul Hamid, culminated in a devastating deportation and slaughter of three hundred thousand men, women and children. This news caused a wave of horror to spread over Europe; but nowhere was the tragedy realized so keenly as amongst the little communities of Armenian students in different parts of France and Switzerland.

At this time Armen Karo, then only seventeen years of age, was pursuing his studies at Nancy. The news of the massacre stirred him to a frenzy and, gathering several of his compatriots together, he wrote in their name to the Central Office of the Dashnakzutoun pledging themselves to the cause of revenge. The Central Office invited the young men to Geneva, and there the plan of campaign was discussed in full detail. Two plans were examined. The first was to prepare an armed force in Egypt and proceed to Zeitoun via Cyprus. The second was to raise insurrections in certain strategically advantageous parts of Turkey, and notably Constantinople itself. After much discussion the first plan was dropped, and organizers were sent to various parts of Turkey to arrange matters.

Armen Karo himself went to Piræus and stayed there until the end of July, 1896; it having been decided that he was not to go to Constantinople till everything was ready, as his knowledge of the town was not so profound as that of others, and notice might be taken of a stranger wandering the streets too much.

He left for Stamboul at the beginning of August and arrived there on the 7th.

At the first meeting of the new revolutionary committee, Armen Karo was appointed leader owing to his superior knowledge of the French language, and the 14th of the month was fixed for the rising.

Every day, from early morning to midnight, a handful of young Armenian men and one or two women worked hard at the making of bombs and revolver ammunition; the necessary metal and explosives being smuggled into Armenian houses, and passed from hand to hand till they reached the little cellar where the conspirators worked.

The enthusiasm and devotion of this little band was wonderful to witness. They had no fear of death—only one thought, and that was to divert the force of Turkey from their unfortunate and defenceless brothers and sisters on to their own heads, in the firm belief that it would be bound to result in the occupation of Constantinople by the Great Powers. Thus would the Armenian question be settled once for all, and their people would be saved and left in peace.

In May, 1896, the Western Powers had threatened Abdul Hamid, and had told him in firm language that another disturbance in the city would compel them to land the forces of their battleships for the protection of foreign nationals.

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The Powers, therefore, would be forced to protect the thousands of Armenians who were nationals of Greece, France, Bulgaria, and in any case no massacre could be carried out with so many marines and sailors on the watch and determined to stamp out disorder.

Full of hope, the little band worked on until two days before the great date. On that day Karo hit upon a new idea. He had found a perfect means of assuring European intervention. He knew enough history to know that massacring of peoples was not nearly as important in the eyes of the Great Powers as an attack on vested and financial interests would be. He therefore decided on a master-stroke.

Between Galatta and Pera stood the great Ottoman Bank. Ottoman only in name, being entirely controlled by Europeans and under the governorship of Sir Edgar Vincent.<sup>1</sup> In the Bank itself were gold and securities of international value and importance. In the Bank itself were one hundred and fifty officials of all grades. In the Bank itself lay the prestige of international finance—the God of the world, the great octopus and parasite on industry.

They would occupy the Bank. They would hold its officials as hostages, and if the Powers refused to intervene and stop the massacre of their countrymen and women which was going on in the streets at that very moment, then they would blow the whole temple sky-high with themselves inside.

Arrangements were made accordingly.

On Wednesday, August 14th, 1896, at one o'clock in the afternoon, seventy-five Armenians would attack, armed with revolvers and two hundred bombs.

<sup>1</sup> Now Lord d'Abernon.

## THE QUESTING BEAST

The same day and at the same hour, another party would attack the Psamathia Barracks.

A few boys would wait at the Galata Bridge Head to throw bombs at the Grand Vizier, Kiamil Pasha, as he drove to the Sultan's Palace.

Two especially chosen youths received instructions to prevent the troops from leaving the Military School at Galata Seray, which they were to do by closing the gates and bombing any troops who tried to force them open.

Several other small bands were to hold up troops approaching the Bank before it had been properly occupied, and these were stationed at certain strategic points such as street corners and cross-roads.

Thus the conspirators would have seized all the important strategic points of Galata, and no Turkish force could advance to the Bank without being held up for a sufficient time to enable the Bank to be completely occupied.

Once the Bank was in Armenian hands, a delegate would go straight to the Foreign Embassies and hand over the Armenian demands signed by the Dashnakzutoun Headquarters in Constantinople.

The demands would be:

1. Cessation of massacres by intervention of Foreign Powers.
2. Reforms in the political and economic position of the Armenian people in Turkey.
3. Safe-conduct for the conspirators.

The alternatives would be to blow up the Bank with all its officials and valuables.

The morning of the 14th dawned to the renewed cries of the massacre of Armenians. The Bosphorus was full of bodies.

The attack started punctually at the agreed time by Armen Karo entering the Bank and engaging a cashier in conversation. The first shot was fired at the Albanian porter at the entrance, who demanded the business of so many Armenians, and then the battle commenced in earnest.

Some drove the cashiers into a room upstairs and stayed guard over them. Others took shelter behind the counters and awaited events.

In an exceedingly short space of time the Turkish Police were firing into the Bank, and the Armenians retaliated with bombs.

An unforeseen difficulty next arose, as it seemed to be impossible to close the doors owing to the broken glass that lay in the threshold.

The fumes from the explosions filled the doorway with smoke, and through this veil Karo could see the revolvers of the police as they tried to force their way in, only to be met by a hail of bullets and well-directed bombs. It took three hours to get the door closed, and of the five Armenian dead and four badly wounded, four were killed merely in the attempt to close the door by sweeping the broken glass away.

Just before the massive doors were closed the first Turkish troops appeared on the scene, and their bayonets were visible to the Armenians in the Bank as the sunlight caught them and threw the glint across the veil of yellow smoke.

The moment the doors were closed, the defence continued from the upper windows. The hail of bombs from above soon cleared the street, and the fighting was continued by sniping from the windows of houses opposite.

Food for the Bank defenders and most excellent wine was discovered in the directors' board-room and private kitchen. The interned officials were likewise fed and their guards reduced. One official was wounded in trying to signal through the window to the Turkish troops, who mistook his intention.

The back of the building presented an almost perfect natural defence, and the defenders were not surprised to see a platoon of soldiers return to the front of the building after having tried in vain to force an entrance in the rear.

In the evening there was slackening of fire and the defenders were extremely careful in their expenditure of ammunition. Several boxes of revolver cartridges were found in the Bank, and these were used to replace the excessive expenditure of ammunition in the earlier afternoon. Towards dark there appeared to be much coming and going in the street, and Karo wondered whether his message to the embassies was bearing results.

Several Armenians next descended into the basement to make arrangements for the blowing up of the Bank, and Karo chose the spots where the dynamite they had brought with them was to be placed.

These arrangements caused great consternation among the imprisoned officials, and when they were told of the decision to blow up the building Karo had to face much supplication and emotion. Several times there were scares of attempted rushes on the Bank, and two field-guns were noticed to have been brought up the street.

The street, however, was too narrow for any field-gun firing except from a distance of the street's width, and as long as the bombs and revolvers of the defenders were still

in use, it was obviously impossible to attempt to blow in the door by this means.

As the darkness was now upon the city, Karo feared a man or two might be enabled in the dark to blow in the door with dynamite.

Accordingly, a room at the very top of the building overlooking the door was garrisoned by men of exceptionally keen eyesight.

At about half-past ten there was a sudden outburst of firing, and Karo found that what he had feared had just been attempted. The bodies of three soldiers on the right of the doorway marked the failure of the attempt. The chief worry for Karo, as the night began, was his realization that ammunition would not hold out for the whole of the forthcoming day, and it was therefore obvious that unless something were done by the European Powers before the following midday, it would be his last day alive, and the Bank would have to be blown up earlier than he had contemplated.

At midnight, however, a series of loud whistles from the street told the defenders that something was happening at last. Hiding behind the curtains of the shattered windows of the first floor, Karo saw M. Aubeineau, the Frenchman who had been charged with the delivery of the message to the embassies. Beside him stood M. Maximov of the Russian Embassy. Sir Edgar Vincent and a Pasha from the Imperial Palace, bearing a white flag, were also in the party.

They called for a parley, and after hurried consultation Karo decided to ask what they wanted.

M. Maximov was the spokesman for the European Powers.

"What are your terms of surrender?" he called out.



"What are your terms? You know ours," replied Karo.

"State them again."

"Stop the massacre immediately. Stop the attacks on the Bank. Give a written guarantee that the reforms we ask for in our declaration for the Armenian provinces will start without delay. Free all Armenian prisoners."

Karo's words were followed by hurried consultation, and then M. Maximov spoke again.

"And if we cannot guarantee these things? "

"Then," replied Karo, "we blow up the Bank, its hundred and fifty European officials and ourselves."

Again there was a consultation and M. Maximov spoke again.

"I am from the Palace," he said. "His Imperial Majesty has given me power to escort you and your friends to one of the European warships now in port, so that tomorrow you will be on your way to Europe."

By this time Karo's friends were becoming impatient, and he was urged by several to let them shoot Sir Edgar Vincent in order to enforce immediate occupation of the city by the Powers, but Karo stayed their hands. He would continue the talk. All the cards had not yet been played. He returned to the window.

"We did not enter this building simply to give you the trouble of coming down here to save us. What have you to say to our demands? "

"The first two conditions," replied M. Maximov, "are already arranged. The massacre in the city has ceased and there has been no firing at the Bank for some hours past. As to your third demand, we shall do our best to see that the conditions of your compatriots in the provinces are ameliorated."

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As there was a long pause before Karo replied, several Armenians noticed in the glare of the lights and torches that the party in the street seemed to be pleased with themselves. This was communicated to Karo, who forthwith hurled the following question at the representative of the Great Powers:

"What guarantee can you give us that the massacres will not start again the moment we leave Constantinople?"

This question seemed to take M. Maximov aback.

"What guarantee do you desire?" he asked.

"The landing of your forces from the warships."

The demand for this definite guarantee was a surprise, and after some few minutes M. Maximov informed Karo that it would be impossible for the Powers to do that, as they could not possibly interfere in the internal affairs of the Turkish state. Karo then reminded the Russian of the declaration of the Powers last May, and of several "interferences" of Great Britain during the first half-century, but to no avail.

Finally Karo closed the conversation.

"If we do not get our demands, then let one hundred and fifty European staff die under the ruins of this building. Perhaps then you will change your minds. The blood of three hundred thousand Armenians is not yet dry, and you tell us you cannot intervene—and expect us to believe you."

M. Maximov then said he wished to confer with the Ambassadors interested, and the assembly in the street melted away.

An hour later M. Maximov returned and called for further parley.

Karo came to the window and M. Maximov promised

on behalf of the Russian, English and French Ambassadors, on his word of honour, that the embassies were ready to accept the terms and give a written guarantee to that effect.

The battle was won. Karo believed the Powers in 1896 as Armenia and Assyro-Chaldea believed the same Powers in 1915.

He was glad he did not have to die in the Bank. He was glad he and his friends would not have to fail for lack of ammunition.

He accepted the assurance, and the remaining conspirators left the Bank accompanied by the members of the European Delegation with whom Karo had treated and a large body of troops. The procession made its way to the port in order to embark on Sir Edgar Vincent's private yacht.

At the port the hostility of the civilian Turks caused a great concourse of people to assemble, and although Karo and his friends got safely on board, the captain of the yacht signalled to a British warship and she moved forward and took up position between the yacht and the port. Shortly afterwards a Russian and a French battleship did the same.

By this time it was morning, and Karo and his friends stayed on the yacht in idleness till four o'clock in the afternoon, when a French pinnace brought M. Maximov, M. Rouet, dragoman of the French Consulate, and an official of the English Consulate on board.

M. Maximov then informed Karo that he and his friends were to prepare to leave on the S.S. *Gironde*, which was bound for Marseilles.

Karo hesitated. "We cannot leave, M. Maximov, until

you give us the signed guarantee. Otherwise you have not fulfilled your promise."

"I am ready to keep my promise, but my colleagues do not agree to do so."

Karo was annoyed.

"But were you not speaking on their behalf, then?" he asked.

The French dragoman intervened. "If you had not committed that mad act yesterday, to-day the blood of your people would not have flown in Constantinople."

Karo's heart sank.

"Do you mean to say there were further massacres to-day?" he asked slowly.

"Worse than yesterday, owing to your folly," was the cold reply.

Karo turned to M. Maximov.

"Is this true?" he asked.

"Unfortunately, yes."

"And your promise as a Christian?"

"Against all my efforts I was unable to stop it, but I have great hope that to-morrow it will quieten."

The gallant Armenian band had been fooled by European diplomacy.

The *Gironde* came alongside; all pretence at decent treatment went by the board. Forcibly disarmed and man-handled, the actors in one of the bravest feats of modern times were pushed on board, and at six p.m. the ship left Galata; the cries of massacred Armenians still, after all they had gone through, rising faintly on the breeze.

With Karo in this fight were four Armenians who live in their people's hearts; Vramian, who was invited in 1915 by the Vali of Van to dine and was poisoned at the

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meal; Hratch, also murdered in Van in 1915; Babken Suny, who was one of the five killed in the Bank itself; and Kennouni, who fell in the attack on the Psamathia Barracks that same day.

That was Karo's story.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

GENERAL AGHA PETROS ELLOFF of Baz, in Assyria, who came to the Lausanne Conference to plead the cause of his people, has led a life of constant hardship, fighting and wandering, and I will set down here one or two of the tales he has told me in different parts of Europe.

As a boy, the son of a well-to-do chieftain, he lived in Baz, a little village south of the Kurdish Hills and west of the Persian town of Urmia. His father was a Turkish subject and a man of considerable breadth of mind. When Agha Petros was fourteen, his father decided it would be a good thing for the boy to go to a school in Urmia which was under the charge of American Presbyterian missionaries, in order that he might be brought up in the Christian faith of his forefathers.

Six or seven other chieftains agreed to send their sons to the same school, and arrangements were made accordingly.

About this time the Kurds, incited by the Turks, were in the habit of holding up travellers into Persia, robbing and killing them if they happened to be Christians, and therefore it was considered advisable that the boys should travel by night under the protection of a mountaineer.

Now the mountaineers of Northern Assyria are trained

from youth to see in the darkness, and spend much of their early life asleep by day and awake by night. One of these mountaineers was therefore chosen to conduct the boys to their school in Persia.

The night for departure came, and the village of Baz turned out to wish the travellers "God-speed." Mounted on horses the little cavalcade moved off on the track to Urmia, and by dawn found themselves in the mountains. They dismounted and searched for a safe hiding-place, which, having found, they used for sleep, and the next evening they mounted again and continued the journey.

The following day, whilst asleep in their newly found shelter, they were awakened by a loud shouting, and before they were fully awake all their clothes—with the exception of their shirts—had been stripped off them and their hands tied behind their backs.

Unceremoniously they were dragged into the light and flung upon the ground. Their captors were some twenty Kurds, who appeared to be highly delighted at their prizes. After much conversation among the men, the boys were placed upon their horses and the whole troop moved off at a gallop. The discomfort of such a ride can be imagined, and after one or two of the boys had fallen off they were mounted in front of the Kurds and their horses led by the reins.

Several miles farther on they halted and dismounted at a Kurdish camp, where they were met by an exceedingly handsome and tall Kurd who appeared to be the leader. Agha Petros could talk Kurdish, and he soon understood that the news of their expedition to Urmia had been heard of, and that these men had been sent out especially to capture them.

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They were not allowed to wait long, for almost immediately the chief mounted his horse and moved off with only six of his followers, taking the boys with him. The faithful guide was told to remain behind.

At a lonely, barren spot the party dismounted, and the boys were placed in a row on their knees. The Kurd leader then sat on a stone in front of them with his men around and proceeded to sharpen his dagger, first on the stone itself and then on the sole of his shoe.

At this the boys started to cry, and one of them asked nervously what was to be done to them.

Without looking up, the leader informed him that he had had orders from the Turkish Vali to intercept them and kill them, as they were Christians and escaping to Persia. They protested with tears in their eyes that they were only going to school. The leader, with his eyes still lowered, said he was sorry but he had to do his duty.

The phrase he had used in expressing his sorrow for what he was about to do gave slight hope to the boys, and with one accord the three nearest, one of whom was Agha Petros, threw themselves before him, kissed his foot and burst into tears, begging him to spare them and Allah would reward him.

"I come from Baz," cried Agha Petros, "and my father will give you money and . . ."

The leader looked up suddenly.

"Baz?" he asked earnestly. "You come from Baz?"

"Yes," replied Agha Petros, and he told him the name of his family.

At this the leader also began to weep, and he told them how as a boy he had known the people of Baz well, and how they had been kind to him although he was a



Mohammedan. At this all the boys renewed their entreaties, and finally the leader rose to his feet.

"My name is Sooto of Oramar and I cannot do this thing."

Then he turned to his soldiers and spoke rapidly to them in Kurdish. Finally, without another word he bade his soldiers clothe the boys, and telling one of them to take the children to the Persian frontier, he returned to his camp at full gallop.

The sequel to this story takes place twenty-four years later, just before the outbreak of the Great War, when Agha Petros was Turkish Consul in the town of his schooldays—Urmia.

One afternoon a *posse* of Persian gendarmerie arrived at the Turkish Consulate with a letter for Agha Petros from the chief of police. The letter was to say that his men had captured a brigand and herd stealer, but as he was a Turkish subject he would hand him over to him for justice. Now, at that time, such Consuls in such places had exceptional powers, and as they had their own armed guards, people who caused trouble could be made to disappear in an extremely short time. Turkish brigands, if caught in Turkey, were summarily executed; and in Western Persia, where the Turks were even more powerful than the Persians, the Persian authorities preferred such cases to be dealt with by Turkish "justice."

Agha Petros sat at his desk and ordered the police to march in the man. The charge was read; the prisoner acknowledged his guilt. The sentence was explained; the prisoner agreed it was just. The wickedness of the crime was stressed rather elaborately, and then Agha Petros stopped and, rising to his feet, went up to the prisoner.

"Sooto of Oramar," he said, "I will spare your life as you spared mine twenty-four years ago. I am Petros of Baz."

Then Agha Petros reminded him of the boys on their way to school and of how he had captured them, and gradually remembrance came back to Sooto.

Agha Petros gave him a sword in gratitude, and Sooto gave Agha Petros a knife.

In 1917 Agha Petros with his Assyro-Chaldean troops captured the village of Oramar itself; but his friend was dead, having been killed earlier in the war.

When Agha Petros was in the twenties he traded in Persian carpets, but because he knew English he was ambitious for more and richer trade in lands where this language was spoken. Thus it came about that he set his heart on going to the United States of America. He managed to obtain the necessary passport and ticket, but he was uncertain whether he should take only his portable stock with him, or send a large consignment of rugs ahead and then follow with the amount with which he could conveniently travel. But in whose hands could he trust his valuable rugs? He knew no one in America. He had no knowledge of how one sent goods ahead. One thing he did know was that the United States was a Christian country and that there was a rich chieftain in New York named Rockefeller. He would send him the carpets and ask him, as a Christian gentleman, to look after them till he came to claim them in person. This he did, and some months later he sailed himself for New York.

On his arrival the first thing he had to do was to find an hotel, and this he succeeded in doing after much trouble

and a fair amount of bargaining. He clung tenaciously to all his bundles, much to the dismay of the hotel porter, and was ushered with difficulty into an elevator. At the first floor he prepared to get out—but the time was not yet. At the second floor he was amazed. At the third he smiled. At the fifth he was delighted. At the sixth he bowed repeatedly to the elevator boy. At the seventh he clapped his hands. At the eighth he began to sing. At the ninth he danced, and when he was shown out at the tenth floor and realized it was the very top of the building he embraced the elevator boy with unconcealed delight.

The explanation of it all was quite simple. In Assyria the ordinary guest sleeps on the ground floor, but the honoured and distinguished guest is placed upstairs—for the nearer you sleep to heaven the greater the respect of your host towards you.

The next day Agha Petros set out to find Mr. J. D. Rockefeller, and after many questions of policemen he found himself in front of the large building where the millionaire does his work. A demand to see Mr. Rockefeller was greeted by a roar of laughter from the janitor. A repetition of the request led to his being told to go away.

Agha Petros could not understand this, so he came back in the afternoon—only to be greeted with abuse. The next day he tried again, but with no greater success. He could not understand this Christian country, nor how Mr. Rockefeller could be so famous and treat him so badly.

At the hotel it was suggested to him that he should write to Mr. Rockefeller. He did, and received a reply that Mr. Rockefeller was out of town. He wrote to his private address and waited two or three days, his heart growing heavier and heavier the while.

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At last there came a letter and a big card, and he was told to present himself at the office at such and such a time and show the janitor the big card.

Proudly Agha Petros set off to the great building, and the difference the big card made was extraordinary. The janitor bowed; the elevator boy smiled; secretaries beamed at him, and finally he was ushered into the presence of the great man himself. Rockefeller was kindness itself, but what intrigued him was why Agha Petros had chosen him out of all the United States to consign his rugs to. Agha Petros explained. His was the only American name he knew, and he was a Christian gentleman. Who more likely, therefore, to be trusted with a poor Easterner's valuables? Mr. Rockefeller seemed pleased at this, and forthwith invited Agha Petros to take the rugs he had brought himself and lay them in his private house. And the consignment that had been sent direct to him? He would buy those as well.

The cheque was made out there and then; a secretary took him to the cashier and, armed with more money than he had ever had in his life before, he returned to his hotel, happy and content with the world.

Agha Petros' first visit to England took place after the war, and he engaged a room in one of the big London hotels. Even there he encountered one little difficulty. On his dressing-table he found a small pillow. This, he thought, is all very well, but pillows should be on beds. He therefore took it off the dressing-table and placed it at the top of the bed. When he returned to his room the pillow was again on the dressing-table. Once more he placed it on the bed. He was quite annoyed that night to

find the little pillow back on the dressing-table, so he rang the bell and a chamber-maid appeared.

"Why for you put this little pillow on here? I put my head on it to sleep."

It was some time before the maid could make Agha Petros understand that pincushions, however large, are better on a dressing-table.

Agha Petros will be heard of again in the Near East before many years are passed; but he has little faith in Allied promises nowadays—naturally enough.

In 1924, when I lived in Oxfordshire, I was visited by an Armenian who told me the story of how Talaat Pasha met his end in Berlin after he had escaped from English justice after the war. The man who told me took part in the actual affair.

Talaat Pasha was Minister of the Interior in Turkey during the war, and was responsible for all the deportations and massacres of Armenians that took place between 1915 and 1917. After the collapse of Turkey, Talaat fled from Constantinople, and although first on the list of Turkish criminals to be handed over to the Allies as part of the Armistice, he succeeded in escaping. It was then that the Dashnakzutoun decided to take justice into their own hands, since the Allies showed no particular desire to do so, and a special meeting of the committee took place. The men whose duty it was to discover Talaat's whereabouts were detailed, and the man chosen to execute summary justice was drawn by lot. To each of the hunters were given three photographs of Talaat Pasha—one as he was, one clean-shaven, and one bearded—the last two photographs having been doctored.

The hunters spread. Greece, the Balkans, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, Scandinavia, Egypt, Russia, all had their men searching, inquiring, listening. For months no news reached the Central Office, and the Armenians began to despair of ever finding the murderer of their people.

Finally news came that he had been discovered in Berlin, and thither all the searchers repaired. The discovery had come about in this way. A searcher whom we will call X, a fluent Turkish and German speaker, had lately been accustomed to taking his meals in a small Turkish-owned restaurant in Berlin, where he continually noticed the comings and goings of Turks, who were finding difficulty in talking German, but for the most part spoke Turkish among themselves.

Having listened to their conversation for several days, he was on the point of moving elsewhere in his search when he caught a sentence that interested him: "He has arrived in Berlin and will come here one of these days." Now the "he" referred to might well have been anyone, but by the tone of respect used in talking of this "he," X felt that this might at last be his quarry.

For two days he again visited the restaurant, and on the second day his luck changed. Whilst he was in the middle of his meal the Turks behind him rose to their feet and welcomed with deference a tall, pale-faced, clean-shaven Turk, who sat at their table.

Opposite X was a looking-glass, and in this he could clearly see the face of the newcomer. X took out his photographs of Talaat and compared them with the man he saw in the mirror, and on comparing the clean-shaven man with the photograph of a moustache-less Talaat he was certain. When the Turks left together he followed

carefully, and was able to take down an address for future reference.

Next he wired his headquarters, and soon learnt that others of his friends were on their way to Berlin, among them being one who knew Talaat Pasha well by sight. When this last one arrived he corroborated X's opinion the moment he saw Talaat leave his small hotel. Particular care was taken to be certain of the identity of the man who was to die for political reasons. It was next agreed that the upper storey of a house opposite the restaurant door, which happened to be empty, should be leased. This was done, and all that remained was to be certain of a time when Talaat would be dining at the restaurant.

Two or three days later X heard the Turks behind him say that on the morrow "he" would be taking his evening meal with them. Luck was in X's way. Five men were to occupy the house opposite and keep their Mausers trained on the doorway. The assassin was to dine with X. The teller of this story was to be at one end of the street and another man at the other end. It was also decided that the moment the assassin fired he was to throw his revolver away and give himself up without a struggle, in case, during the excitement, he were to fire into the crowd that would undoubtedly gather at the sound of the shot. Finally, as always, warning must be given and the shot fired from in front. Dashnakists have never shot the persecutors of their country in the back; though I must say that the difference to the murdered man seems to me to be negligible.

However, the men were posted, and X and his friend sat down to their meal and watched the mirror. Surely enough, after a little while, in came Talaat Pasha, and he

stayed there an hour. The strain on the man who was to shoot him that evening must have been tremendous. Would Talaat never finish?

At last he rose—and alone. The others were staying on. This made things easier. Talaat put on his coat and scarf and hat—and gloves. He took a long time to dress himself. He opened the door and stepped out. X remained seated; his friend rose as Talaat crossed the threshold. Talaat had barely gone ten yards. The street was deserted.

“Talaat!” The voice of the assassin rang out loudly.

Talaat spun round on his heel and looked straight down the muzzle of a Mauser.

“Dashnakzutoun!” cried the man, and at that dreaded name Talaat’s face changed to one of abject terror. He shook; he put his hands before his face. And then the shot rang out.

Talaat fell stone dead. The assassin threw his Mauser away from him. Five pairs of eyes watched the body from the house opposite in case it should move, and five Mausers covered it still. In a minute the street was full of civilians and police. There was no resistance.

The news spread quickly that it was Talaat Pasha, and somehow or other the German crowd understood that he had deserved his fate. The assassin was taken to prison, tried and acquitted.

And that is the story of Talaat’s end.



## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

1923 FOUND the family at 11 Downing Street, with my father still Chancellor of the Exchequer. Bonar Law, the Prime Minister, who as such had the right to have Chequers as his week-end resort, because of his dislike for country life allowed my father to use it as his own. This was a great joy to my father, and indeed to the whole of the family, and many a happy and peaceful week-end was spent there. My three married sisters, my brother, my unmarried sister and myself frequently went to Chequers, and there was much coming and going of Ministers and Dominion representatives. I spent some of my time in finishing off my first novel, in reading voraciously, and in practising the piano, which instrument I had ceased to touch when I went to Eton and had had to teach myself since the war.

The Bonar Law Government was rapidly proving itself as ineffective as the Coalition, and flagrant injustices were still tolerated, much to my indignation.

Up in London the family was pestered by Press representatives of all kinds, and to one or two I must have given some hint of unorthodox political and economic opinions, which was to bear fruit later on. At Chequers photographers clicked their cameras at all and sundry, and produced a series of posed studies of the Baldwin family, which probably delighted the loyal suburbs intensely.

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It was about this time that I first became interested in the currency problem, in a desire to find out about these "slumps" and "booms" that are part of the oratorical stock-in-trade of the politician. I soon discovered that they must either have a cause or be a direct act of God. As I could not conscientiously imagine God in some kind of heavenly bed turning on his right side and murmuring: "Let there be a slump;" and then, after an indefinite period, turning on his left side and ordering a "boom," I decided that the cause must be found.

When I discovered that money had been invented in order to circulate goods, I knew I had made an interesting discovery. One day the world will come down to this elementary fact, and then our economic troubles will be on their way to solution. The only fear, and it is a certain fear, is that the world will realize this only as a result of a complete collapse of its financial shibboleths, whereupon we shall have to start again from the beginning.

However, time will show, and there is no need to enter into economic arguments here.

On May 22nd Bonar Law resigned on the ground of ill-health. He had been suffering for some time past from cancer, and the disease was spreading inwardly. There were now two candidates for the Premiership—Lord Curzon and my father. Of the two the former had, naturally, the greater claim; but he was possessed of two severe handicaps. He was a member of the House of Lords, and he was not popular with his Party. Balfour recommended to Lord Stamfordham that my father should be appointed, and after much coming and going between the Palace and Downing Street, my father was sent for by the King. He went in a taxi-cab as Chancellor of the

Exchequer and came back in the same cab as Prime Minister. The shock to Lord Curzon was much greater than the public supposed, as he had never doubted for a moment that his ambition would be fulfilled. Some months after this there appeared in *Justice* an open letter to me from Fred Gorle, setting forth arguments why I, with the views I had expressed to certain newspapers, should join the Social Democratic Federation. This letter made me think.

Very rapidly of late I had found myself becoming more and more antagonistic to the hopelessly stagnant doctrine of Conservatism, and the interviews I had had with one or two Conservative Ministers, urging inquiry into certain cases of injustice, showed me that there was no hope of progressive thought or realization of pledges in that direction. Gradually, also, the ideal of a Socialistic State was beginning to fire my imagination. I realized that sooner or later there must be a parting of the ways, and I was quite prepared to face it.

I went down to Astley in June, and Major E. W. S. Grogan, one of the pioneers of Kenya and the first man ever to walk from the Cape to Cairo, came to stay. He was due shortly to attend a conference in London between Indian representatives and the leaders of the white settlers in Kenya. We discussed the points of difference and motored to London together, where we both took part in what turned out to be an abortive conference. Back again at Astley, I pondered long over the inevitable, and finally came to a series of conclusions which affected my subsequent actions. The means of arrival at these conclusions and the different pros and cons cannot be set down here, as they affect other persons, but it is sufficient to say that

I believed—as I believe now—that Socialism is the only way in which this country must tread if it wishes to avert economic collapse and future international warfare. I could have kept silence—it was the easiest way. It would not be decent to express my opinions to the country and stay under the parental roof. I had therefore to go elsewhere if I believed firmly in my thesis. I went elsewhere.

An old friend of mine who rented a small house in Oxfordshire offered to share his home with me, and I accepted.

I knew I had taken an uncomfortable path. I knew it would be misunderstood. I knew that those who preach individuality have a fit whenever it is expressed contrary to their conception, but I had no idea that I was to suffer the contumely, abuse, and misrepresentations that I subsequently endured. However, it has probably done me good, and, after all, was part of my destiny—in which I have complete faith, believing that in life one has only a little latitude in which to wander, and that the big decisions and the big results are all pre-destined. When one looks back on life one realizes how so many small or great experiences that have made one suffer, and for which one searches for a reason, have all worked in, furbished, coloured or frittered that tapestry of our own life that our whole existence weaves.

In the spring of 1923 I was invited by G.L.B., who was then Honorary Attaché at Madrid, to stay with him in Spain. Before proceeding thither I went a tour round the old battlefields, and wondered at the change that had so rapidly come over the once devastated area. Only on the big open battlefields did I capture a strained atmos-

phere, and felt that I was not alone. I had been with my father over these same places some few years before, and shown him the different spots where I had wandered and been frightened, or had rested and been content. Even a few years had made a difference—new houses, tilled fields, many people.

I left for Madrid from Paris, and arriving there found, as is usual with G.L.B., nobody to meet me. I managed to explain that I wanted to go to the British Embassy, and was trundled off thither in a horse cab. There I discovered the address of G.L.B.'s house, and was finally deposited at my destination.

Spain at that time was in an unhappy state, but nothing seemed to alter the feudal aspects of the capital. The nobility all had their six footmen and elegant carriages, and their outlook was at least two hundred years behind the time.

I spent some ten days in Spain, and went to three bull-fights. At the time I was certainly interested in the crowd and the whole setting, and thrilled by the fight itself—though after the death of the bull I felt a similar lassitude to that experienced at the termination of a bombardment. I saw one *espada* badly gored and another receive the adoration of the crowd in a striking manner. It appeared that the young matador had been so successful in the ring that he had grown proud and no longer troubled to do his best; in fact, he frequently engaged a junior to take his place at the last minute. The result of this was excessive unpopularity with the crowd. The moment he appeared in the ring the audience whistled and howled derision, but his only answer was a mocking smile. Whenever the bull came near him he would run straight

for the wooden fencing, and the fury of the crowd at his apparent cowardice was intense. Finally the time came when the bull, stuck with *banderillas*, was to meet the *espada* alone. The matador received his sword and, hiding it under his scarlet cape, moved towards the bull, the crowd still hurling derision from the safety of their seats. Then began the most exciting performance I have ever seen. He stood still and the bull charged. He bent his body slightly and the long horns whizzed past him. He played the bull over his shoulder; he merely took a half step aside when the rush came. The audience held its breath. The matador looked at the crowd with a mocking smile as he twisted his body again to avert the horns. It seemed that every minute he would be caught and tossed into the air. It seemed that every minute was an hour. Then, to crown all, as the bull made a last rush he performed the most difficult feat an *espada* can do—he raised his sword and drove it clean into the base of the neck of the running beast, and the bull fell dead in a second. The crowd went mad. Such skill had not been known for years. Cushions were thrown into the ring, hats and sticks as well, but all the matador did was to walk round the arena looking at the crowd—not with hat in hand, bowing and smiling, but with his hat under his arm, looking at them contemptuously. He was only twenty-one, but the greatest matador in Spain.

Looking back on bull-fighting now, I realize its cruelty, and to-day I would not encourage such a thing by going there; but at that time I was apt to acquiesce in things I did not approve of, much more than I do now.

I visited Toledo, most glorious red and yellow town, moated and old, full of history and romance.

I also went to Arranjuez, for had I not read of "die schöne Tage von Arranjuez sind jetzt vorüber," and there were horse races and Alfonso himself.

On the way back to Madrid I was struck by the fact that both sides of the road were flanked by mounted gendarmes a hundred yards apart. I was just asking G.L.B. the reason for this when a huge racing-car, mounted with a machine-gun, overtook us at about sixty miles an hour, rapidly followed by the King in his own car and a similarly armed motor bringing up the rear. I had read so often in English papers of the way Alfonso went about without protection that I was amused. When he went to the theatre in Madrid at least a quarter of the audience were plain-clothes police. I was not surprised he should be so protected, after his behaviour over the disaster of his troops at Annural, but this was before the famous "ole hombres"<sup>1</sup> telegram, and the setting up of a dictatorship to prevent Alfonso from being fixed with the responsibility for this disaster.

I met a young Russian named Shura Meyendorf, whose father had been Minister at Madrid, and we set off on a walking tour in the Guadarramas for two days. To walk those hills in the early morning when the mist is still lying lazily on the ground, and to watch it rise so sleepily till the sun pierces it and shows one the level country far below; to see the morning lights on the Escorial as it lies in the plain; to run the gauntlet from roving mountain bulls; to walk fifteen miles and sleep in a mountain hut tired, warm

<sup>1</sup> This was a telegram from Alfonso found on General Sylvester's dead body after the disaster at Annural, when ten thousand Spaniards were ambushed and killed. It was couched in the language of the bull-ring, "Ole hombres, I am waiting," and referred to the attack that Alfonso, behind the backs of his War Office, had ordered General Sylvester to carry out.

and happy—this was a grand time, and the companionship of Shura Meyendorf enhanced it. He was a keen mountaineer, and with his brother was buried by an avalanche in Switzerland the following winter.

Madrid is worth a visit for one thing alone, and that is its picture gallery, the Prado. In it are the Velasquez, Titians, Raphaels, Vandycks, Tintoretts, Goyas, El Grecos and Murillos, statues and paintings, ancient and modern, beautifully grouped in infinite variety. I spent several mornings there and would gladly spend many more.

The Calla de Alcala is the main and only good street in the town, and there are about twenty motor accidents a day in that one street alone, since the Spanish driving is rather temperamental. At the edge of the town, at the Puerto del Sol, there is generally a pile of cars in a heap. This is caused by the fact that in the town you have to drive on the left of the road and outside the town on the right. The accidents take place during the mental transition period. When any pedestrian is run into by a motor-car the driver flies for his life, and in ten minutes the crowd has set fire to the car. I learnt that there was not much trade in motor insurances. On May 1st, any car, except a doctor's (and he has to have a notice on the windscreen with "El Medico" written on it), is immediately burnt for being about at all on Labour Day.

I visited the Royal Palace and watched the guard mount—at least, I was told this was what they were doing—and the royal armoury, the tapestry work and the theatre. I became accustomed to the late hours. I learnt that the Spanish have never forgiven England for the death of Catherine of Aragon, the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the taking of Gibraltar. Spain itself is half a musical



comedy and half a tragedy; it will not be long before there is a republic there.<sup>1</sup>

I returned to Oxfordshire and joined the S.D.F.

There I finished my novel and sent it to my agents, having decided to send it in under the *nom de plume* of Martin Hussingtree, because I was stupidly annoyed at a friend of the family who suggested that it would be published only because my father had become Prime Minister.

On August 25th the Allies finally evacuated Constantinople, and as I read the news I looked back on the negligible result of our campaign against Turkey, that had started in 1915 and only finished then. Armenia once more was left alone to her fate.

On October 30th Bonar Law died, happy to be free of a mortal coil that for so long had caused him such suffering. I never knew him but I had known his children, especially his son Charlie who fell in the war, and Bonar's name had been a household word in my family for long years past.

In the autumn of 1923 I went to Holland, as I had a letter for M. Troelestro, the Dutch Socialist leader. He was not at the Hague, so I was unable to see him, but I was entertained delightfully by Sir Adrian Baillie of the British Embassy, who had been in the same house at Eton with me.

Holland has a great fascination for me—the low-storeyed houses, the canals, the flowers, and the whole atmosphere of a miniature painting is so unlike things as we know them that their freshness has an ever-abiding charm.

<sup>1</sup> Easter, 1931.

## THE QUESTING BEAST

In November my father asked for a dissolution and went to the country on a Protectionist policy. The election waxed fast and furious, and at the request of the S.D.F. I went to London to offer my opinion on the futility of such a policy at such a time, and to tell of the inevitability of disaster as a result of the deflationary policy pursued since 1921. I did this at the Islington Public Baths on behalf of my friend, Fred Montague, now Under-Secretary for Air; and thus I started political work in earnest. There was to be no drawing back now. The die was cast and I have not regretted the step yet.

I was suffering from malaria at the time I spoke, and returning to the country I went to bed for several days. I and J.P.B. (whose house I shared) were asked by a friend to go to Nevin in North Wales for a change of air, and thither we went; being there at the time the news came through of the defeat of the Conservatives. Nevin was cold and bleak and, I must say, extremely unattractive in winter.

The result of my speaking for the Labour Party brought me a mass of correspondence, most of it abusive and some of it indecent. The things I was supposed to have said were certainly most reprehensible, but as I had neither said them nor even thought them I was only amused and rather disappointed in Democracy. One letter I received from an Armenian Socialist, M. Varandian, encouraged me somewhat.

*"Je vous applaudis de tout cœur, mon cher camarade et ami, pour le noble et courageux geste que vous avez fait bravant tant de préjugés et de difficultés. Tout jeune, vous êtes lancé dans le feu de la bataille. Bravo . . ."*

It was the one ray of light in a tempest of abuse and although I was—and I hope always will be—able to star

alone for what I believe, it is pleasant to have sympathy from one who also suffered in his day for his beliefs.

On January 21st my father's Government was defeated, and resigned; at which Ramsay Macdonald became Prime Minister.

We returned to Oxfordshire from North Wales and I settled down to correcting proofs and making poultry-farming pay. At that time our joint income was small, and as we wished to make some extra money we took in lodgers, though I believe they prefer to be called "paying guests." This did well for a time, and as we could only afford a cook and a man who helped us with the poultry and everything else, I did some of the housework myself. At one time we had four lodgers at once. Luckily, as the years went by, the pen and a deceased cousin enabled us to live at peace, without taking in strangers; for which I was heartily thankful. Besides, the hens did well, and J.P.B. was an expert at the job. I should not care now to go back to 1924, for I do not believe in trying to be a politician, a writer, a housemaid and a poultry-farmer all at the same time. One or two of our lodgers were better at staying on or disappearing suddenly than they were at paying; which may be good fun for those who like lawsuits, but as I object to such methods and prefer peace to war, we cut our losses and hoped for reward in other spheres.

During the whole time, however, we managed to keep open house to anyone that called, and the house and garden have seen many different nationalities and members of all classes of the social scale.

We tried breeding Alsatians, but there was something wrong with the atmosphere, and the dogs did not seem fond enough of each other to help us. We were forced<sup>H</sup>

eventually to get rid of them in the middle of the agitation against the breed and the assertion that Alsatians were dangerous.

My novel "Konyetz" was published about this time but did not have much sale. In the summer months I took up oil-painting, and passed many hours transferring my idea of Chiltern landscapes to a canvas.

During the late Conservative administration, 'Agha Petros had been to the Colonial Office to appeal for a return of the money paid out by him on behalf of the British in Northern Mesopotamia during the refugee period. He had been interviewed by a distinguished official who had treated him with scant courtesy, denying that he represented the people of his race. Contrary to my instructions, Agha Petros had handed over to this official the sealed, signed and witnessed document nominating him as the representative of the Assyro-Chaldeans. This was three months ago, and in spite of repeated requests for the return of this proof of his position, no reply was vouchsafed. As soon as Mr. J. H. Thomas took over the office of Colonial Secretary, I went to see him and explained the case. In twenty-four hours Agha Petros was once more in possession of his document. This, then, was something different. Things were going to move under the Labour Government. Justice would now prevail, in one case at least.

Encouraged by this, I gave the papers concerning 'Agha Petros' claim to Mr. Thomas in the early autumn of the year, but unhappily the Government was to fall before it could be looked into. The case was handed in between 1924 and 1929, but in 1929 when I presented it under a Labour Government it was merely passed to the same permanent officials who had rejected it under the Con-

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servative administrations. Nevertheless, I had held high hopes of eventual justice from 1924-9. Since the latter date I have unfortunately had much further proof of the permanency of a policy when it is once held by permanent officials who control Ministers—and even self-styled Socialist Ministers at that.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

IN June, 1924, I was urged to take a constituency, and I agreed. I went to see Egerton Wake, the National Organizer of the Labour Party, and he suggested a choice of two constituencies—East Aberdeen and South Norfolk. I looked at the map of Aberdeen and thought of the cold and snow and sea mist, and declined hurriedly. I thought I would prefer a borough. There was one going begging which nobody wanted; the last Labour candidate having polled under two thousand votes and lost his deposit. This was Dudley, and furthermore it was in Worcestershire. I accepted this seat, and as a result immediately came under a further hail of abuse. My reasons for accepting Dudley were threefold. Firstly, it appeared to be a hopeless seat, and secondly, I believed that, in the position I was in, proof of my faith in the cause of Socialism could best be known by facing the most difficult situation I could find. Thirdly, I was obstinate. I had been abused; I would take on my abusers and wear them out. Opposition always appeals to me, but the opposition must come first. I went down to Dudley and was adopted prospective candidate, being the only one of our party in the field.

Dudley is an industrial constituency of age-old Tory tradition. Netherton, which is included in the borough, is more industrial still, and has always had Liberal and Nonconformist tendencies. The former is purely English

in outlook, the latter possesses much Welsh blood. The difference between the two parts of the constituency was shown very clearly in the Civil War, when Dudley was Royalist, and the Netherton smiths refused to shoe the King's horses. I was further interested in Dudley since a cousin of my grandfather's, with the same name as myself, had fought the borough twice as a Chartist, polling thirty-three votes the first time and three the second. It was a dreary, poverty-stricken place, and very backward politically from the Labour point of view, since on the Borough Council there were only two Labour members. There are now twelve (1931).

However, we soon got to work, and by the beginning of October I had held outdoor meetings in most of the congested streets.

On October 9th the Labour Government fell, owing to a vote of censure which was the result of the prosecution and withdrawal of charges against a Communist named Campbell. The Labour Government was panic-stricken and resigned forthwith, and the country was soon in the throes of an election which was, for me, bitterer than I could ever have believed possible.

The Tory card in this election was the famous Zinoviev letter, the truth of which has never been explained.

This bombshell was printed in the *Daily Mail* and other papers, and for some reason sent England into hysterics. It was the translation of a letter from M. Zinoviev of Russia to the Communist Party of Great Britain, urging them to get on with the revolution in England. Considering that this is what the Communist Party is for, and that objection to such a letter must obviously concern only M. Zinoviev and the Communist Party, it is incredible

how it should have upset so many people. Nevertheless the public took it into their heads that it was a letter to the Labour Party, and many people believed that the Russians would land in England on the morning of polling day. It is, moreover, related that an old lady in Brecon, setting off to record her vote, came upon a trench outside her very door surmounted by red flags, and it took the combined efforts of the Tory canvassers and the gas inspector to persuade her that the revolution had not begun.

As a matter of fact the original of this letter was never found, for the very simple reason that there never was one.

I offered to interrogate people concerned during the first inquiry set up by the Government, but my offer was not accepted, although at that time I had information in my possession that would have cleared up the question, even at the expense of a scandal. I am, however, quite certain that the man who actually gave the letter to the Press believed in its genuineness.

In Dudley I was faced with a personal campaign of beer, lies and bitterness such as I never wish to experience again. I borrowed the £150 for the deposit, paid £10 myself and the rest was raised by the voters themselves. It only cost us about £200, and the 1929 election cost us much less than that. I polled 10,314 votes, and my Tory opponent beat me by 885. The result showed that the abuse did not harm me much, and it reminded me strongly of La Monnoye's little verse:

" Tu dis partout du mal de moi;  
Je dis partout du bien de toi.  
Mais vois quel malheur est le nôtre:  
On ne nous croit, ni l'un ni l'autre."

At this time and for the next three years the weekly



Press also contributed their fair share of slander and unpleasantness.

In my only club, to which I had belonged since 1917, people would get up and move away when I sat on the sofa to read a paper, and the things that were said just loud enough for me to hear were most entertaining. In fact, the imagination of some people would have made their fortunes in fiction. Persons who had been unnaturally friendly to me when my father had leapt to fame as Chancellor of the Exchequer took excessive pains to avoid my gaze. It was a good time for sifting the wheat from the chaff, and in no single case did my political heterodoxy affect my relations with my friends—or, for that matter, my family—much to the amazement of countless narrow-minded humbugs in all walks of life. I never replied to or bothered about this sort of behaviour, and it gradually died away of its own accord, and several people I now know quite well have since told me the things they had heard about me and how they had believed them. The most popular story was that I had abused my father on the public platform. Since I have never even mentioned his name in any meeting during the whole of my short political life, my traducers were extremely wide of the mark. I once carried on a long conversation in a railway train with an ardent Tory business man, all about myself. I learnt that I was really married but that my wife had left me owing to my cruelty; that my father had turned me out of the house for seducing the housemaid; that I had been imprisoned abroad (quite true) for crooked financial dealing (not quite so true), and that I was mad—though he believed I had had a bad time during the war when I was imprisoned for being a conscientious objector. I never told him my

name, even when he asked me to lunch if I ever passed his way. I resisted the impulse to do so—I do not quite know why.

About this time I bought a letter of William Morris's that showed me that he also had received abuse in his day.

"KELMSCOTT HOUSE,

"UPPER MALL,

"HAMMERSMITH,

"May 9th.

"DEAR SIR,—I am obliged to you for your note inviting me to offer myself to the Greenwich Zoo as a possible candidate; but my principles as a revolutionary Socialist prevent my accepting your flattering offer.

"I am, dear Sir,

"Yours faithfully,

"WILLIAM MORRIS.

"MR. H. C. DONOVAN."

I never wrote such a nice answer to anything I received, chiefly because my traducers were all anonymous.

The election resulted in an overwhelming victory for the Tories, and on November 4th my father became Prime Minister again.

In 1925 I published in England and America, under my own name, the history of my imprisonment in Armenia and Turkey with the title of "Six Prisons and Two Revolutions." This also did not sell well, and was not reviewed by several papers who disliked me or (and) my politics.

On March 20th Lord Curzon died, and I could not help regretting that he did not do what Disraeli is reputed to have suggested, when he said on his death-bed: "Had I been a Nihilist I would have told all." His knowledge of

the intrigues and follies of post-war foreign policy must have been profound, and of most fascinating interest.

In the spring of 1925 I was invited by an old friend in the Military Intelligence Department at Cologne to pay a visit there, and as I wished to see some of the neighbouring steelworks I accepted his invitation. Besides, I wanted badly to visit Brussels in order to see the comrade of my prison days in Turkey—Shura<sup>1</sup> Iablókhov—whom I had not seen since his release.

I therefore left for Brussels via Paris, where I met several Armenian friends, and found Shura in the former town—happy but none too prosperous. In Brussels I met several of the Armenian colony, one or two of the men having served under me in the Armeno-Turkish War of 1920. I also had an interview with Emile Vandervelde, the Socialist Minister, lately returned from Moscow, where he had been defending Socialists who were on trial for sedition.

In Cologne I found myself in an officers' mess once more, and a very friendly crowd they were. The town was very much happier than when I had last seen it, and the opera was in full swing.

In Essen I visited steelworks, and learnt of wages and hours of labour; the directors being extremely willing to show me all I wished to see.

I likewise visited the jail in Cologne, where many Germans were imprisoned for *lèse-majesté* against the British troops in one form or another.

For the next four years I spoke at political meetings in many parts of England, Wales and Scotland, doing as many as three a week for months on end. Street corners, by-elections, mass meetings indoors and out. I stayed always

<sup>1</sup> Or Khansorian.

with the local Labour people in all kinds of houses, from the local doctor's to the unemployed man's. During these years I met some of the finest souls it has ever been my privilege to meet—old Socialists who had been persecuted for their faith, and young ones fired with the same ideals as I.

One old man I stayed with never ended his day without playing "England Arise" on his organ before he went up to bed. Another had been a friend of Morris and Edward Carpenter, and when he spoke of the two I remembered Ben Tillett's description of the difference between them: "Morris was a great big lovable whirlwind, and Edward Carpenter—well, like a soft breeze through the woods, with a sunset behind."

In those days hope and faith were in the hearts of Socialists, but it was before they had witnessed the Labour Government of 1929 carrying on Toryism and covering their followers with titles and decorations. . . .

In many chapels and brotherhoods did I preach during those years. To Moravians and Wesleyans, Congregationalists, Labour Churches, Methodists and Spiritualists—sometimes in churches, sometimes in schools, and sometimes in hired halls or private houses. I seemed to live in the train, and I enjoyed it all except the cold bedrooms during the winter, when I was forced to sleep in my underclothes or dress under the bedclothes as one did at school.

Enthusiasm was everywhere, the light appearing in the darkest places; converts were coming to us from all classes. The day was dawning—but we did not know it would be followed in 1929 by such a downpour that all our spirits were damped before a year had passed.

I read Robert Blatchford's "Britain for the British,"

and Tressall's " Ragged-Trousered Philanthropist "—and it was all good food.

At Clitheroe I had an interesting reunion when I discovered that Alderman Dobbie, the Labour candidate, had been a sergeant in the very same battery to which I was attached for a week's instruction in France during the war. He had been there at the same time as I and remembered the three Guards officers who had come in turn for this short course.

Folk say that the early enthusiasm of the first Socialists was the thing to have witnessed, but that displayed all over the country during the years '24 to '29 was wonderful indeed, and I doubt if it will ever be the same again.

I wrote two plays for the wireless which were broadcast about this time from London—" The Fog " and " The Wrong 'Bus."

In the autumn of 1925 the Government began to head straight for disaster in their handling of the mining situation, and voted ten millions as a subsidy, hoping to stave off the inevitable. The rumblings of dissatisfaction had been heard for long in the coalfields, but the strength of the Government, as represented by numbers in the House of Commons, was lulling the Cabinet to sleep, and the fools' paradise, which was made perfect after the undergraduates of Oxford and Cambridge and the young men in their plus-fours from the London suburbs had rallied to the Government in London during the General Strike, was to last until 1929.

On December 1st, Austen Chamberlain signed an international agreement which pledged the future youth of this country to another massacre in the event of Germany, France or Belgium being attacked by one or the

other. For this difficult piece of work he was rewarded with a K.G., and the country sang the praises of the pact with a great deal more heartiness than will the mothers, fathers or lovers of the generation that is to be sacrificed when the time comes.

On January 31st the British evacuated Cologne, and the last stage of the Great War was reached. Colossal celebrations marked the liberation of the Rhine provinces, and many soldiers brought home German wives, which was certainly good for the international spirit.

In May the General Strike was declared in support of the locked-out miners. The full story of how this was declared and why it ended when it did, and other matters of interest, will one day be written, perhaps, but it is too recent a remembrance for me to go into it in detail at the moment. Of the conferences with the Government and the attitude of many of the actors in this great strike there is a mass of knowledge of which the general public has no conception. Many Tories to this day, especially the women, honestly believe it was organized by Russia and was the beginning of a genuine revolution. If this is so it was extremely badly managed. I certainly knew nothing of such intentions, and I do not know anyone who knew where the ammunition dumps and rifles were to be found. At the time I thought it would be more effective to back the miners financially with the strength of the whole Trade Union movement, yet, although the strike collapsed and the miners were beaten, the effect was to strengthen the whole Labour cause considerably and lead us to victory in three years' time. The police force received a bonus of £235,000 from those who were grateful for the continuance of the capitalist system,

The early part of 1926 I had spent in Algiers, where my mother's brother had a little villa, and the following year J.P.B. and I again went out there, renewing my memories of 1920 and motoring with my uncle many hundreds of miles. Every winter till this last one we spent from three months to six weeks there, and during those times we covered the whole country very effectively from Algiers to Constantine, to Touggourt, to Ghardaia, to Oran and back. The warm climate enabled me to escape the winter months without malaria, which from East African days to 1926 had become an annual occurrence that left a trail of mental depression in its wake from which I gladly escaped at my uncle's invitation. One year we came home from Algiers in a destroyer; which, after two days in the Bay of Biscay and three days in seas nearly as bad, I considered a very good name for that uncomfortable kind of cockle-shell.

When my father and mother were at Chequers in the fine weather they would occasionally come over for tea, but politics were not our chief topic of conversation, our interests generally centring on family matters and literary subjects. I took my father one day to see Ewelme Church, which he had often heard of from Mr. Asquith but never seen. This was during the time that my opponents in Dudley were still filling their followers with very different stories of our relationship. Toleration and sympathy seem alien to many people who are incapable of holding a difference of opinion, shouting the house down, or decrying their controversialist.

In November the municipal elections showed large Socialist gains, but the writing on the wall was not apparent to the Tories.

Also this winter there took place the famous by-election in Smethwick, where Oswald Mosley was the Labour candidate. I say "famous" because at the time it created a great stir and was about the dirtiest election that had been known for years. The newspapers set themselves the task of vilifying Oswald Mosley and his wife to such an extent that the whole Labour movement was roused in earnest, and Socialist propagandists of their own accord poured into the constituency, some of them who could not afford the fare walking from many miles distant. Every speech made by either husband or wife was turned and twisted; every dress Lady Cynthia had on was either described as "studded in diamonds" or of "fabulous expense." I was so indignant that I also went to Smethwick, where, I read, Oswald Mosley was drinking champagne with every meal. When I entered the hotel where he and his supporters were lunching I had to pass the Press table to reach him, and approaching, I called out: "Hallo, where's the champagne?" The next day one newspaper came out with the information that as soon as I arrived I called for champagne.

So great was the concentration of speakers that on the last three days of the fight the Labour Party kept an open-air platform going without a break from ten in the morning till ten at night. Those uncertain voters who read the tripe Oswald Mosley was supposed to have spoken flocked to the meetings and listened. The following day they read the reports and, realizing the absolute inaccuracy, decided to vote for the man who was being treated in such an unfair manner. Birmingham Fascists came over to help the Tory, and the tales of riotous meetings were so exaggerated that on the polling day, when the Tory candidate



expected a vast amount of motor-cars from Birmingham to help him, he received only half the number, as the owners had been scared by the stories into believing that their cars would be burnt in heaps by the revolutionary mob. The result of the election was a well-deserved majority of 6,582 for Oswald Mosley—an increase of 4,429 over the Labour majority of two years previously.

There was some little trouble in the Labour Party at Dundee, and a new prospective candidate was being looked for. The local women's section of the Divisional Labour Party wanted to recommend me to the election committee, and it was a temptation to accept, since had I been chosen I would have been certain of election as there was a majority in the town of 12,000 odd for the Labour candidate, which rose to nearly 14,000 in 1929. However, I had promised the people of Dudley I would fight there again, and I was not prepared to go back on my word.

One of my constituents in Dudley, Mr. Hugh Watson, discovered amongst some old papers a letter to his father from Sir Robert Lowe, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1875, and as it is probably the only instance we have of a chancellor's verse, I will quote it, since I have Mr. Watson's permission to do so. It was written on the reverse side of a letter to Mr. Watson's father refusing to open a new school building. As Sir Robert was an albino and extremely short-sighted he probably did not notice his pencilled poem on the back when he reached for a sheet of note-paper. It referred to an occasion when Queen Victoria's royal yacht ran down a pleasure steamer and drowned three people. The following day the Press had come out with headlines on the great shock the poor Queen had received, and

paragraphs on the *lèse-majesté* of the steamer having been in the way.

LINES SUGGESTED BY NEWSPAPER COMMENTS ON  
A RECENT CATASTROPHE IN THE SOLENT

Oh! weep for the living and not for the dead,  
Oh! weep for the royal and not for the mean.  
We cannot forget that three spirits have fled,  
But just think how in dying they frightened the Queen.

They ought to have kept so respectful a distance  
That living or dying they could not be seen.  
They had some right to hazard their paltry existence,  
But no right whatever to frighten the Queen.

Disloyal and selfish! they should have contrived it,  
The poor wreck of being from notice to screen—  
They died, and their victim—thank heaven—has survived it,  
But what are three lives to the fright of one Queen?

*August 23rd, 1875.*

1927 passed with meetings and speeches and the publication by me of a translation from the French called "Socialism and the Bible," and the only change, apart from the winter in Algiers, was a trip in the pouring rain at night to North Wales to see the eclipse of the moon. As it did not make any difference in the rain to the general obscurity when it was eclipsed, the effect was not particularly striking.

This same year I had become greatly interested in Spiritualism, and was privileged to attend two of the Valiantine sittings, which are reported in Mr. Dennis Bradley's book "Towards the Stars." I also saw a certain amount of Sir A. Conan Doyle, with whom I had many a discussion. He was a man of amazing faith and gentleness, and before he passed over we had a long conversation

on the pros and cons of the Russian Revolution. Some months after his passing, at a sitting, Conan Doyle picked up the conversation where he had left off and explained how much his views had altered. The medium was Mrs. Garrett.

In 1928 a new Town Hall was completed in Dudley, and the officials of the town wrote to my father and asked him to perform the opening ceremony. This he naturally refused to do. As this was a non-party affair and the sitting Tory member would be present with the Mayor—who was a Liberal—as well as myself, I wrote and explained this to him, adding that I thought the townspeople would like him to do it. He agreed, and the ceremony was a great success.

The result of the General Strike in an industrial area had strengthened the local Labour Party considerably. Many Tory working-men had joined and the tide was rapidly going in our favour. This latter fact was obvious, but I was certainly amazed at the conversions. I discovered that the Tory working-men had always believed their Government would hold the balance evenly between employers and employed, but the accepting of the mine-owners' point of view after the lock-out had altered their opinion. Whether one agrees or not this is what was told to me by converted ones themselves.

I had by 1928 no fear of defeat in Dudley.

I was privileged to receive just before the election a copy of Edwin Markham's "Man with a Hoe," perhaps the most celebrated piece of all modern American poetry, with a flattering dedication in the author's own handwriting. It hangs on my wall as I write, while underneath in the drawer of a little cabinet are the letters of

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abuse—which I keep to read when things appear to be going too well with me.

In Algiers in 1929 Dr. Roger Chance and I wrote a small book, which was published just before the election under the title of "Conservatism and Wealth." The real work, however, was all his.

The General Election was fixed for May 30th, and eight weeks previously I was ensconced in Dudley ready for the fray.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THE 1929 election in Dudley was a very different affair from the last one as regards unpleasantness. There was very little beer flowing and hardly any "personalities." The enthusiasm of the Labour voters was tremendous, and our eve-of-the-poll rally was the biggest ever seen in the borough. The count did not take long and I was elected with a majority of 3,043 over my Tory opponent, with the Liberal at the bottom just saving his deposit. I was pleased with the result for two reasons. The election had been fought on under £150, and I had won the seat without ever having stood a drink to anyone in the borough, except my own personal friends, during the whole of the five years I had been "nursing" Dudley. As the town had long been known as very corrupt at election times, I felt the back of the beast of bribery had been broken there for all time, and that the votes of the electorate could no longer be bought. This was May 30th, and the five years of ceaseless propaganda had borne its fruit.

Several times in the last two years I had felt inclined to give up the struggle, and for the past year I had even kept a letter of resignation under my writing-pad, and was at times sorely tempted to send it in. It was chiefly because I had promised my supporters in 1924 to fight again that I went on with it. The strain of being continually alone without encouragement was beginning to tell, and the

constant bickering of the local party was making me despair. Elections, however, are not won or lost by local parties but by the votes of the masses who owe no definite allegiance to any one party. The people of Dudley are not politically minded, and their allegiance is apt to wander at every election. As regards real Socialists—I should doubt if there were as many as two hundred in the whole borough. It will take several years to make more. Nevertheless, I fought both elections on clear Socialist lines, and can only believe that the swing to Labour was a desire for a change of Government rather than a belief in any particular political theory.

I was pleased on my return to Oxfordshire to find over a hundred kind telegrams from friends, and one letter—a single sheet unsigned—the envelope postmarked from London—with the two words “Blast you” inscribed thereon and underlined for emphasis.

One letter I received from A.E.H., an old comrade in arms, part of which I cannot refrain from quoting owing to the wit of the postscriptum.

*“The inglorious first of June.*

“MY DEAR OLIVER,—Though much shaken, I am taking up my pen to write a letter of really *sincere* congratulations upon a most magnificent victory. I am only sorry for both yourself and me that you should have been one of so many. How much more glorious to have contributed the Only Socialist gain in a Holocaust of Losses.

“It will be a most interesting Parliament to start in, and one, I should think, of many opportunities.

“‘Lamps for young Aladdins and bowies for the bold.’ It looks as though you will be facing your constituents

again before very long, but in the meanwhile you are in for some fun; and at worst—I mean from the lowest motives—it is pleasant to reflect.

‘That if loving the people is Canaan in view,  
It’s a hundred a quarter to have them love you.’

“I was too shaken by my late night and my general terror of wholesale despoliation to write to you at all yesterday.

“P.S.—I find I am rallying a little under the influence of drink, and the inspiring poetry of Lord Macaulay who, you will remember, wrote (to within a single letter, anyway):

‘In those old days our fathers stood bravely side by side.  
They faced the Marxian fury; they tamed the Fabian pride.’

“That’s what I’m doing.

“A.E.H.”

A few weeks after the election I again went on a tour of the battlefields, taking with me E.D., our gardener and general factotum in Oxfordshire, who had not seen the old places since he was there during the war. As he had been on the same part of the front as I had we did not need to wander apart. We walked about ten or twelve miles a day, making Arras and Cambrai our bases and taking the local train every morning, rejoining it on its return journey in the evening at some different station.

The opening of the new Parliament showed the Labour Party massed behind the oldest Cabinet of the century. We were all fired with enthusiasm, and rapidly overlooked one thing that showed itself at the very outset. In 1924, when

the Labour Cabinet went to receive their seals of office, one member went in a felt hat; in 1929 every member wore a silk hat. This was an improvement, no doubt, and gave tone to Socialism by an outward show of some badge of orthodoxy and respect for tradition from which the Labour Government has so far not swerved an inch. A little thing in itself, no doubt, but a sign nevertheless. Anyway, thirty years of denouncing such badges had been proved a waste of breath.

It was not long before many of the Labour backbenchers realized that the Civil Service was still ruling the country, and that, with very few exceptions, the inferiority complex of Trade Union leaders in the Government was going to be an admirable bulwark against any change in the capitalist state of society. In about six months it was apparent that our endeavours to receive social justice for individuals would be in vain. We were met at every corner by claims of "no precedent," "can't be done," and "you fellows want to go too fast." The financial control of the country was more firmly than ever in the hands of the Bank of England, and the first Budget continued the policy of deflation and led to a large increase in the numbers of the unemployed. Some of the I.L.P. and myself were forced to vote against the Government several times; and owing to our agitation, backed up at a later stage by the leaders of the T.U.C., we were able to obtain the abolition of the "genuinely seeking work" clause in the Unemployed Insurance Act, which the Government had not been prepared to give up. The Lord Chamberlain's office—which up to 1924, when the first Labour Government took the reins of government, had always been a party appointment—continued to be held by a Tory; every non-



Parliamentary commission set up was formed of a majority of anti-Labour; every governorship save one went to a Tory or a Liberal. No change was made in the appointment of magistrates in the non-industrial areas, and ancient and decrepit men were reappointed to serve on committees on the grounds that they had been so long on them it would be a pity to turn them off. In every department Toryism was entrenched, riveted and reinforced, and the confidence of anti-Labour was bought at the expense of mocking Socialism as a dream and impossible Utopia.

The culmination of this respect for tradition was reached when John Beckett, the Socialist member for Peckham, picked the Mace off the table of the House and walked with it to the Bar. The shock to the Parliamentary Labour Party was incredible to watch. Tradition had been insulted—really, in another second the Constitution might be upset. But Toryism and the Constitution need fear nothing. Every title given to Labour people is a feather in their cap. They need have no terrors that their customs and traditions will not be preserved; in fact, it is truly amazing that they should ever wish to change a Government that is not only leaving capitalism enthroned but is subsidizing it in every way, from coal to opera. "*Non opus sed opera*," as Irving Albery, the Tory member for Gravesend has so wittily said.

It is too close to write of the reason for all this. That shall be done many years later. The intrigues of the Coalition days, the Carlton Club meeting, the Zinoviev letter, the General Strike and the collapse of the Socialist mentality in those in whom so many had faith will be written later, and the story will be found full of interest indeed.

Government in England is still being run by the pre-

war mind, and between it and the post-war, or even the war-time mind, there is an uncrossable gulf. Fear of action, lack of appreciation of the speed of evolution, biased approach to economic subjects must give way before energy, foresight and initiative. Ten years or so will see the end of those who now sit in the seats of power, but I fear that much damage will have been done by then. In Russia to-day is taking place the greatest economic experiment the world has ever known, and none of our rulers have the slightest conception of what its success will mean—or even what its failure will entail. There is no planning for the future and no faith or belief in any remedy for the present situation. The speeches and flag-waving of the past thirty years have led to an elderly gathering of ex-Liberals and soi-disant Socialists sitting contentedly in the seats of power, devoid of initiative, incapable of decision, and in some cases swollen with pride. And the whole tragedy is kept in its position by a greater economic tyranny than any political party has ever known—in this manner, for were a Labour member to vote or agitate against the Cabinet he knows full well that he runs the grave risk of not being endorsed as Labour candidate at the next election; and if that should happen he, with no other financial support than his Parliamentary salary of £400 a year, would at a late stage in life be forced back to the pit, back to the loom or back to the rolling-mill. Such a power over one's supporters deadens and stultifies, weakens and dispirits. It encourages the leaders to believe in their strength, a strength that is but negative, a weakness that is bound to break them in the end.

There are only two political mentalities in the House of Commons, the Conservative and the Radical. The former

accept and do not question; they believe implicitly in their vested interest, be it employers' federation or Trade Union; they will cling like limpets to their position and traditions; they will sit silent while their former pledges are denied and sacrificed, sincerely believing it to be the best in the long run because some greater leader than they has said so. They are sub-consciously afraid of what they do not understand or know about. The latter do not accept; they question; they are unfettered by interests; they believe in nothing so much as change; they have little respect for tradition. Where the former are content that they have "found," the latter are ever seeking—seeking the Truth in the deepest of wells; eschewing humbug and denouncing hypocrisy. And strangely enough those two mentalities are to be found side by side in each of the three parties.

In the Parliament of 1929 are to be found, on all sides, some of the finest characters this country has ever produced; men capable of sacrifice; men capable of a great love and men whom the bitterness of life has made far gentler than ever it could be supposed. Many different professions, many different tastes. In the smoking-room alone you can hear little groups, of mixed political faiths, discussing every conceivable subject under the sun, from finance to poetry, from etymology to old furniture, from science to histrionics; and my two years there have happily found me many new friends. In this Parliament I have met again many with whom I had spoken on platforms and at street corners during the past six years, and I have learnt to appreciate them more.

Life has been a little gentler to me of late, and for some reason or another people do not seem so bitter towards me as they did. It may be that they have come to realize that

a difference of political opinion need not necessarily mean a hatred towards the possessor of opposite views. At any rate, I feel that what I went through may help others to hold views contrary to their environment; for cannot they now call upon the sacred word "precedent" with justice?

It was about 1921, when I had returned from Turkey, that my father first told me of his great deed of sacrifice. It was in my mother's bedroom when they were both changing for dinner, and I had come to say good night as I was going out for the evening.

He told me of how, during the war, he had been disturbed at the money his investments were bringing him in from the production of war material, and how he had felt it to be "blood-money." He had therefore made calculations and decided to hand to the State every penny he had made in excess of what he was receiving before the slaughter began. It came to £125,000. He had asked my mother's permission before he gave it to the country, and she had agreed. What did I think about it?

It was not my money; it was not my affair; but I admired them both for the decision and said so. The result of that gift has brought my father's income to less than it has ever been since 1908, and many of his cherished dreams for the future have consequently vanished.

It is a pity that those of his political persuasion who oppose him so bitterly cannot have as clear a conscience as he possesses, and it is incredible to think that only one other man in England followed his appeal, when he gave the money, to do likewise.

Though in politics we look at things from a different angle, I am immensely privileged in being from the stock of one who has given a greater example of material sacrifice

to his country than any Prime Minister of any country since the world began.

The House of Commons is a heart-breaking place. The wasted hours; the old-fashioned machinery of government; the opposition for the sake of opposition; the interminable talking that has not the slightest effect, and the pile of legislation that need never come to us for decision throws a pall on all and sundry. The deadening effect of the comfort and warmth so easily enable one to forget the purpose of one's presence, and the vain endeavours to seek justice for a constituent make one wonder at the life one is leading, and deplore the ineffectiveness of one's labours.

Of the future of the Labour Party I could write much. It will, I feel convinced, always remain a Labour Party and never a Socialist one. The time must come when the genuine Socialist will break away and form a new party; unless international disaster previously produce chaos in this country—which is certainly possible. History has a habit of repeating itself, and just as the L.R.C.<sup>1</sup> turned itself out of the Liberal Party so will Socialists leave the Labour Party. They may even do it in the same words as Ramsay Macdonald used in his letter to Keir Hardie when he left the Liberals: "I have stuck to the Liberal Party until now, hoping that they would fulfil the faith which we had in them."

A new element, however, is still to be reckoned with in the country, and that is the new Labour voter. This voter is the twenty-one-year-old son or daughter of the ex-Liberal and ex-Conservative working-man, the man who was converted some fifteen years ago, whose children

<sup>1</sup> Labour Representation Committee.

formerly would have swollen the ranks of the two older parties but to-day, having been brought up on Labour propaganda, will normally vote Labour. This voter must necessarily come forward in ever-increasing numbers, and every year will add to Labour's strength. This is the explanation of recent by-elections when, although many Socialists have been too disillusioned to vote, the Labour figures have kept up in a striking manner. The next few years should be full of interest, and the eyes of all students of foreign politics must perforce centre on Russia.

The five-year plan is still heading towards fulfilment, and if that succeeds it will mean that Russia is capable of producing all her own needs and being economically independent of Europe. Then will begin the raising of the standard of living of her workers, and once that reaches and surpasses European standards the fun will begin. Germany, undoubtedly, will turn Communist, and France's reaction to this may be disastrous for the peace of Europe. If, on the other hand, the five-year plan does not succeed, there is no reason why it should not do so in six, seven or ten years.

Capitalism as we have known it since the industrial revolution is giving way, but it is too early to tell what will take its place. State Socialism seems, at the moment, to be the next step; but much depends on Russia.

In the United States of America the constant persecution of Radical sentiment must eventually have its effect, but whether that heterogeneous collection of races will eternally remain united under a system of capitalism or break out into violence and secession is a moot point and worthy of speculation.

That there is strange justice for Radicals in the U.S.A.

is realized when we remember the recent case of Saccho and Vanzetti, and I always consider the latter's final letter to Judge Thayer one of the finest and most tragic utterances of any social martyr. He, an Italian, who could scarcely speak English, addressed the judge as follows :

" If it had not been for these thing, I might have live out my life talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have die, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life can we hope to do such work for tolerance, for joostice, for man's understanding of man, as now we do by an accident. Our words—our lives—our pains—nothing. The taking of our lives—lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish-peddler—all. That last moment belongs to us—that agony is our triumph."

In 1931 I left the Labour Party and became Independent. I could no longer tolerate the continued holding to office of those who showed no desire to transform the system, but, on the contrary, were continually bolstering it up by legislation, inaction and flunkeyism. The result of this decision forced the head office to urge the Dudley Labour Party to ask for my resignation. I replied that I would consider the matter if they could show me when I had ever voted contrary to my election pledges, or if they knew of any former member for the borough who had attended the House as regularly as I had done since my election. That is how the matter now stands, and the future is wrapped in a dark cloud. I should have preferred that they had given some hint of appreciation for my constant attention to the cause for which I had been

## THE QUESTING BEAST

elected—but after all I was paid a Parliamentary salary to do that.

I have come to the end of my tale, such as it is, and I, the Questing Beast, will still go on questing—it is my nature so to do. My destiny is to be fighting for something, and my curse is that I cease to care the moment it is attained. But only by fulfilling your destiny can you develop your spiritual ego—and that is the object of life. To develop the individual soul and make it as good a one as you can.

I still seek the Socialist state; I still seek the International Brotherhood of Man. I shall always fight humbug and hypocrisy, and shall try to keep a hold on my tongue. I have seen so much unhappiness as a result of the spoken word, and if I have learnt nothing else I have learnt to try and be silent if I cannot speak well of someone. I generally can, though. I am lucky in finding little things in people that please me and which others so often miss; because, perhaps, I take trouble over people. I know nothing of my future or whether I shall continue in politics—I, like the world, am evolving and do not know whither. It may be that I shall return to Armenia. My past has been so wrapped up in that country that I feel I shall go there again—and if so, may it by then be a happier land.

I have been much abused; I shall go on being abused; but God has given me many friends and that shall add to my stature.

*Absolvi parte meam animam.*

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